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RECREATIONS

OF

A RECLUSE.

"——Not a Recluse by choice? then how?
By doom
Of doctors,—broken health and shattered nerves;
Or, if by choice, because he chose the less
Of dual evils, a sequestered life,
Mid books, companions of his solitude,
To escape the greater, else inevitable,
Insana mens in corpore insano."

NICIAS FOXCAR.

98407

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

NN-M-25

LONDON:
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RECREATIONS OF A RECLUSE.

LITTLE TALBOT THE GREAT.

THE very name of Talbot was a terror in France, and served to still fractious babes, as well as to rout his foes in a panic of dismay, when the Countess of Auvergne longed so to see this redoubtable Englishman, and plotted to take him with guile. In one of the scenes on the battlements before Orleans, in the First Part of King Henry the Sixth, where numbers of the French are gathered together, and the Dauphin and even La Pucelle are amongst them, we have an English soldier suddenly rushing in, with the cry of "A Talbot! A Talbot!" and incontinently there is an *exeunt omnes*, leaving their clothes behind them: a *coup de théâtre* eminently adapted to tickle the patriotism of British spectators when Elizabeth was queen. The one soldier who has thus put to flight almost an army of the aliens, is an old hand at the trick, which, by his own account, has answered more than once. He makes bold to take their leavings, and informs himself in

soliloquy, for the instruction of the "auditorium" at large, that the cry of Talbot serves him for a sword; "for I have loaden me with many spoils, using no other weapon but his name." Such a hero it is highly natural in the Countess of Auvergne to desire to see.

Of course she has formed an idea of his person. A warrior so doughty must needs be of stalwart frame—a man of towering stature and imposing presence. My lady has pictured Talbot to herself as a very Hercules, a Hector at the least, or some equally Muscular Pagan:

> Great is the rumour of this dreadful knight,
> And his achievements of no less account:
> Fain would mine eyes be witness with mine ears,
> To give their censure of these rare reports.

The opportunity of doing so occurs soon. Talbot receives a message from "the virtuous lady, Countess of Auvergne," with modesty admiring his renown, in which she entreats him to vouchsafe to visit her poor castle, that she may boast she hath beheld the man whose glory fills the world with high report. At once the Lord Talbot complies.

There is plot and counterplot in the encounter, but with that we are not here concerned. It is with the contrast between the lady's ideal of Talbot, and the physique of the real man himself, that we have to do. Her messenger returns, bringing Talbot with him, and together they enter the court of the castle, where the Countess is already waiting. And

then ensues a shock of more than what Wordsworth calls mild surprise:

Enter MESSENGER and TALBOT.

Mess. Madam,
According as your ladyship desired,
My message craved, so is Lord Talbot come.
Countess. And he is welcome. *What!* is THIS *the man?*
Mess. Madam, it is.
Countess. Is *this* the scourge of France?
Is this the Talbot so much feared abroad,
That with his name the mothers still their babes?
I see report is fabulous and false:
I thought I should have seen some Hercules,
A second Hector, for his grim aspect,
And large proportion of his strong-knit limbs.
Alas! *this is a child, a silly dwarf:*
It cannot be *this weak and writhled shrimp*
Should strike such terror to his enemies."

But even her ladyship, before the interview was over, came to think this little shrimp of a fellow very like a whale.

Agesilaus, the great King of Sparta, was small of size; and when Tachos, King of Egypt, on forming an alliance with him, had his first sight of his petty person, the sum total of the Spartan hero's inches was so absurdly inferior to Egypt's expectations, that Tachos had the ill manners to vent his disappointment in a reference to the mountain which brought forth a mouse. Ὤδινεν ὄρος, Ζευς δ'ἐφοβεῖτο, τὸ δ'ἔτεκεν μῦν. The mountain was in labour, and Zeus himself was all alarm,—but what

came to the birth was a mouse. Agesilaus, however, was ready-witted in repartee. *Φανήσομαι σοι ποτε καὶ λεών*, One of these days you'll be thinking me a lion, was his reply, we are told, to the dull-eyed giber. We must look to the mind and not to the outward appearance, said Æsop to his master: *Ἀφορᾶν οὖν δεῖ εἰς τὸν νοῦν, καὶ μὴ εἰς τὴν ὄψιν*: and Æsop spoke feelingly, considering his stunted size and crooked back.

If, says Mr. Emerson, command, eloquence, art, or invention, exist in the most deformed person, all the accidents that usually displease only serve now to please, and to raise esteem and wonder higher. And he quotes a saying of Du Guesclin's, "Since I am so ugly, it behoves me to be bold." Those who have ruled human destinies, like planets, for thousands of years, adds the essayist, were not handsome men. And he urges, that if a man can raise a small city to be a great kingdom, can make bread cheap, can irrigate deserts, can join oceans by canals, can subdue steam, can organise victory, can lead the opinions of mankind, can enlarge knowledge, it is no matter whether his nose is parallel to his spine, as it ought to be, or whether he has a nose at all; whether his legs are straight, or whether his legs are amputated. "His deformities will come to be reckoned ornamental, and advantageous on the whole." Perhaps, however, it requires the glasses of a transcendental philosopher to see the particular advantage on the whole.

Of one in old time who wrote as seldom man

wrote, it was said by them to whom he wrote, and who were disappointed with his person, that his letters indeed were weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence weak, and his speech contemptible.

Plutarch tells us that the Macedonian notion about Flaminius was of a fierce commander, intent on devastation, breathing menace and slaughter, at the head of a host of barbarians, himself the biggest barbarian of all. Great, therefore, was their surprise when they met in him "a young man of a mild aspect, who spoke very good Greek, and was a lover of true honour."—According to Timæus, the Sicilians, at the first appearance of Gylippus, sent from Lacedemon to aid them against the Athenians, "laughed at his cloak and head of hair;" yet scarcely had he shown himself before they "gathered about him, as birds do about an owl, and were ready to follow him wherever he pleased."—Ptolemy is said to have been considerably disgusted at first with Cato's mean dress and appearance, especially when associated with such supercilious manners; but on getting to talk with him, and hearing his "free and nervous eloquence, he was easily reconciled to him."

When Julian made his triumphal entry into Constantinople (A.D. 361), an innumerable multitude pressed round him with eager respect, and, says Gibbon, were perhaps disappointed when they beheld the small stature and simple garb of a hero whose inexperienced youth had vanquished the barbarians of Germany, and who had now tra-

versed, in a successful career, the whole continent of Europe, from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Bosphorus. It is in the luminous, or voluminous, pages (which was it, Mr. Sheridan?) of the same historian that we read how that veteran general Sclerus, who had twice been invested with the purple, as well as twice loaded with chains, being desirous of ending in peace the small remainder of his days, approached the throne of Basil (A.D. 976), an aged suppliant, with dim eyes and faltering steps, leaning on his two attendants, and how the emperor exclaimed, in the insolence of youth and power, "And is *this* the man who has so long been the object of our terror?"

Bacon's saying, that deformed people are good to employ in business, because they have a constant spur to great actions, that by some noble deed they may rescue their persons from contempt, is an assertion which Mrs. Thrale (Piozzi), in her British Synonymy, approves as in some sort established by experience; many men famous in history having been of this class—"the great warriors, above all, as it should seem in very contradiction to nature—when Agesilaus, King William the Third, and Ladislaus, surnamed *Cubitalis*, that pigmy King of Poland, reigned, and [the last] fought more victorious battles, as Alexander Gaguinus relates, than all his longer-legged predecessors had done." *Corpore parvus eram*, I was of small stature, he says—*cubito vix altior*, scarcely above a cubit high; *sed tamen in parvo corpore magnus eram*, Nevertheless, small as

was my size, I was a great man. The lady's reference to William III. suggests an apt quotation from Lord Macaulay, who reckons it probable that among the 120,000 soldiers, who were marshalled round Neerwinden under all the standards of Western Europe, the two feeblest in body were "the hunchbacked dwarf [Luxembourg] who urged forward the fiery onset of France, and the asthmatic skeleton [William] who covered the slow retreat of England." Mr. Hayward, who annotates the quotation to Mrs. Piozzi's text, assumes that all readers of Shakspeare will call to mind the Countess of Auvergne's speech to Talbot.

Many a man of note went out of his way for the sake of a look at Frederick the Great. And what went they out for to see? A man, as Comte de Ségur describes him in old age, great in genius, small in stature; stooping, and as it were bent down under the weight of his laurels and of his long toils. His blue coat, old and worn like his body; . . . . . his waistcoat covered with snuff. . . . . In his small figure, nevertheless, "you discerned a spirit greater than any other man's"—a spirit especially self-asserting in the fire of his eyes. So, again, General von der Marwitz, who had three memorable views of Frederick, dilates on his old three-cornered regimental hat, with the strings torn and loose, and the white feather in it tattered and dirty; his coat "old and dusty, the yellow waistcoat covered with snuff;" and of course what Mr. Carlyle calls those perpetual boots, of which

the royal wearer would allow no polishing or blacking, still less any change for new ones while they would hang together. Even at dinner-time, always his brightest hour, Frederick sits "very snuffy, and does not sufficiently abhor grease on his fingers, or keep his nails quite clean," or perhaps his linen either, whereof his allowance was a thought scanty. "I think I have heard there were but twelve shirts, not in first-rate order, when the King died," writes Mr. Carlyle: "A King supremely indifferent to small concerns; especially to that of shirts and tailorages not essential." Shabby, snuffy, stooping little man, with uncleanly hands, with linen not white, and boots not black,—could that be Frederick the Great?

Yet, be it here incidentally remarked, that M. de Sainte-Beuve expressly signalises Frederick as having this *caractère* peculiar to great men, that your first view of him altogether surpassed your expectation.

Quite the converse of the late Lord Dudley's remark, that Nature seldom invests great men with any outward signs, from which their greatness may be known or foretold.

The satirical topographer of Little Pedlington and the Pedlingtonians recounts of his introduction to the great local artist, Daubson, that, as "usually happens with one's preconceived notions of the personal appearance of eminent people," his own, with respect to Daubson, turned out to be all wrong. For though one may descry, in the portrait of Michael

Angelo, the severity and stern vigour of his works; and in Raphael's, tenderness, delicacy, and elegance; and in Rembrandt's, his coarseness as well as his strength; and in Vandyck's, his refinement; in all, their intellectual power;—in Daubson himself was perceptible nothing indicative of his (alleged) creative faculty. That is an amusing story which is told of Dr. Bentley—Richard the Great—on occasion of a Cambridge University court of inquiry into the propagation of atheism by Mr. Tinkler Ducket, a Fellow of Caius, and follower of Strutt. Court being seated, as De Quincey relates the procedure, Bentley begged to know which was the atheist; and upon Tinkler, who was a little meagre man, being pointed out to him, "Atheist!" said he, "how! is that the atheist? Why, I thought an atheist would be at least as big as Burrough the beadle!" Burrough, it may readily be supposed, was a burly personage,—physically up to the Doctor's ideal of a leader to a defiant philosophy. Tiny Tinkler in that capacity was, to Bentley's thinking, too absurd.

Milton moralises, in his magnificent prose, on the liability of Truth itself, with all its intrinsic royalty, to be disparaged and depreciated at first sight: "whose first appearance to our eyes, bleared and dimmed with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and unplausible than many errors; even as" —he adds, and this simile occasions the quotation— "even as the person is of many a great man slight and contemptible to see."

One of the great Corneille's biographers declares

that when he first saw that *grand homme*, he took him for a tradesman of Rouen. Could that lumpish creature be veritably the man who had made Greeks and Romans discourse in such lofty strains? Not a trace of genius about that heavy exterior; and when the poet opened his mouth, it was but to convict himself of a greater dulness of dead weight than before.

When you saw Malesherbes for the first time, they say,—in his chesnut-coloured coat with huge pockets, his waistcoat fouled with snuff, his wig ill combed and all awry, and heard him talk in so commonplace and unaffected a style,—it was hard work to persuade yourself you were in the presence of a man so distinguished. So at least Boissy d'Anglas describes him. But according to Chateaubriand, the very first phrase that Malesherbes uttered was enough to declare him what he was.

Of John Lord Teignmouth, ex-Governor-General of India, in his Clapham retirement, Sir James Stephen says, that his appearance betokened anything but what he had been—the friend of Sir William Jones, the associate of Warren Hastings, the adviser of Henry Dundas, and the choice of William Pitt when he had a trust to confer, superior in splendour, perhaps in importance, to his own. If the *fasces* had really been borne before that quiet every-day-looking gentleman, then Clapham Common had totally misconceived what manner of men governors-general are. "The idea of the Common was as magnificent as that of a Lord Mayor in the

mind of Martinus Scriblerus"—or rather, perhaps, it might be said, in the mind of Continental Europe at large. "But a glance at our Aurungzebe, in the Clapham coach, was enough to dispel the illusion." Could that be Talbot,—or Teignmouth,—or any other capital T?

We read in the voyages of Captain Cook, that when the all-conquering King of Bolabola, whose very name set folks trembling, arrived in Ulietea,—"from the terror attached to his name the English naturally expected to see a fine specimen of barbaric heroism, but he proved a feeble old man, half blind, and particularly stupid."

The reader of Sir Walter Scott's first novel of note—whence all the brilliant series derived their generic title—will remember Waverley's surprise at the actual presence of the freebooter, Donald Bean Lean. The profession which that marauder followed—the wilderness in which he dwelt—the wild warrior forms that surrounded him, were all calculated to inspire terror. From such accompaniments, Waverley prepared himself to meet a stern, gigantic, ferocious figure, such as Salvator Rosa would have chosen to be the central object of a group of banditti.

"Donald Bean Lean was the very reverse of all these. He was thin in person and low in stature, with light sandy-coloured hair, and small pale features, from which he derived his agnomen of *Bean*, or white; and although his form was light, well-proportioned, and active, he appeared, on the whole, rather a diminutive and insignificant figure." The

redoubtable Hong-Kong pirate, Eli Boggs, was tried for piracy and murder during Mr. Wingrove Cooke's sojourn in China; and that gentleman has a word or two to say for the American felon. Instead of being in appearance, as his name and fame suggested, a villain of the Blackbeard class, he was like the hero of a sentimental novel: "a face of feminine beauty; not a down upon the upper lip; large lustrous eyes; a mouth the smile of which might woo coy maiden; affluent black hair, not carelessly parted; hands so small and so delicately white that they would create a sensation in Belgravia: such was the Hong-Kong pirate, Eli Boggs." And to Mr. Cooke it seemed impossible that the handsome boy in the prisoner's dock could be the culprit whose name had been for three years connected with the boldest and bloodiest acts of piracy.

The French in Lewis the Twelfth's time had been taught to regard the Spanish hero, Gonsalvo of Cordova, with mingled feelings of fear and hatred, and, according to Guicciardini, could scarcely credit their senses when they beheld the bugbear of their imaginations distinguished above all others for the majesty of his presence, the polished elegance of his discourse, and manners in which dignity was blended with grace. The Spaniards of the last generation called Lord Cochrane *El Diablo*, and we are told how the lady-wife of an expelled viceroy marvelled to find him a rational being and gentleman, instead of the ferocious brute that had been pictured to her.

Edward Irving, already mistrusted as a crazy heretic, records of his reception in Edinburgh soon after the outcry began against him, that "unbounded was the wonder of men to find that I had not a rough tiger's skin, with tusks and horns and other savage instruments."

Colonel Montgomery Maxwell's narrative of his first inspection of Napoleon, in 1814, involves the "frank confession" that he felt much disappointed, and that for the moment the film seemed to fall from his eyes, when the man who had been the idol of his imagination for years, stood before him, "a round ungraceful figure, with a most unpoetically protuberant stomach." "I mentally exclaimed, as I peeped at his round, thick, short thighs, and pot-belly, 'Is this the great Napoleon?'"

Mr. Tytler, the historian of Scotland, expresses the astonishment he felt when he first met Lord Hill (it was in 1830, at dinner with Lord Teignmouth.) "Instead of the bold-looking soldier, there slipped into the room a short, pot-bellied body, with a sweet round face, and a remarkably mild expression, who seemed afraid of the sound of his own voice; speaking in a lisp, and creeping about the chairs and tables, as if he had a great inclination to hide himself under them. I almost laughed outright when I was told this was the famous Lord Hill."

Thomas Moore once told Washington Irving of his hearing an eager exclamation from a carriage as he was passing, "There's Moore! there's Moore!" and that looking round, he saw a lady with upraised

hands and an expression of sad disappointment, as much as to say, Impossible! *that* can never be Moore! —Southey used to say, after he had once seen Jeffrey, and taken his measure in the matter of physical inches, that it would be impossible ever again to feel angry with anything so small.

Little (Thomas, Esq.), alias Moore, often jots down in his Diary the surprises he experienced on meeting this, that, or the other "celebrity," and finding them so different from his *à priori* impressions. For example, he meets Mr. Roebuck in 1839, at Colonel Napier's, and declares himself vastly "surprised," "as nothing could be less like a firebrand than he is, his manner and look being particularly gentle. But this is frequently the case; my poor friend Robert Emmet was as mild and gentle in his manner as any girl."

Mr. Dickens good-humouredly pictures his presentation across the Atlantic to a Dr. Crocus, who "looks as if I didn't by any means realise his expectations, which, in a linen blouse, and a great straw-hat with a green ribbon, and no gloves, and my face and nose profusely ornamented with the stings of mosquitoes and the bites of bugs, it is very likely I did not." Boz in a blouse,—Boz bug-bitten all over his face,—alas for the illusion of idealising Doctor Crocus.

Dr. Croly, in his memoirs of Marston, soldier and statesman, takes or makes repeated occasion to illustrate the discrepancy between one's preconception of distinguished men and their actual presence. As

where the autobiographer sees La Fayette for the first time, and reports: "I saw a quiet visage, and a figure of moderate size, rather *embonpoint*, and altogether the reverse of that fire-eyed and lean-countenanced Cassius which I had pictured in my imagination." Marston adds that the General's manners perplexed him as much as his features, being calm, easy, and almost frank; so that it was impossible to recognise the Frenchman in him except by his language; and he was the last man in whom could be detected that toy of the theatre, "the French marquis." At another time Mr. Carlyle's Sea-green Incorruptible is Marston's subject. He pictures himself awaiting in a small room the approach of the terror of France and horror of Europe, during half an hour which seemed to him interminable. The door at last opened, a valet came in, and the name of "Robespierre," writes our soldier-statesman, "thrilled through every fibre; but instead of the frowning giant to which my fancy had involuntarily attached the name, I saw following him a slight figure, highly dressed, and even with the air of a fop on the stage." Shifting the scene to England, we have, among others, Edmund Burke—of whom, in his political career, by-the-by, Dr. Croly became the enthusiastic biographer—thus referred to the same category of illusory preconceptions: "Like most men who have made themselves familiar with the works of a great writer, I had formed a portraiture of him by anticipation. I never was more disappointed. Instead of the expressive counte-

nance and commanding figure which I had imagined to enshrine the soul of the most splendid of all orators, I saw a form of the middle size and of a homely appearance, a heavy physiognomy, and the whole finished by two appurtenances which would have been fatal to the divinity of the Apollo Belvedere — spectacles and a wig." His voice and manner, it is added, were scarcely more (Dr. Croly writes, or at least prints, it "scarcely less") prepossessing; the one being as abrupt and clamorous as the other was rustic and ungraceful: altogether, he had the general look of a farmer of the better order, and seemed, at best, made to figure on a grand jury. John Philpot Curran, again, another of the author of "Salathiel's" brilliant fellow-countrymen: "Curran was the last man to be judged of by appearances. Nature had been singularly unkind to his exterior, as if the more to astonish us by the powers of the man within." His figure, we are told, was undersized, his visage brown, hard, and peasant-like; his gesture a gesticulation, and his voice alternately feeble and shrill; so that the whole effect of his oratory was to be derived from means with which that little meagre frame and sharp treble had nothing to do—unless, perhaps, in the negative way of let and hindrance.

For once, however, the limner of these disappointing portraits has to declare his preconception realised; and that is in the instance of Charles James Fox. The great Whig is thus introduced by our Tory divine: "I now saw Fox for the first time, and I was instantly

struck with the singular similitude of all that I saw of him to all that I had conceived from his character and style. In the broad bold forehead it could not be difficult to discover the strong sense—in the relaxed mouth, the self-indulgent and reckless enjoyment—in the quick, small eye under those magnificent black brows, the man of sagacity, of sarcasm, and of humour." This is the one noteworthy exception to the rule of Dr. Croly's disappointed anticipations, and the exception proves the rule.

Mr. Thackeray, under one of his aliases, is amusingly suggestive in his sketch of a Dinner in the City, where he is awed by the vision of a veteran officer in scarlet, with silver epaulets, and a profuse quantity of bullion and silver lace, &c. &c. "Who is the general?" he asks his neighbour at table; "is it the Marquis of Anglesea, or the Rajah of Sarawak?" "That! pooh!" says Pilkington; "that is Mr. Champignon, M.P., of Whitehall Gardens and Fungus Abbey, Citizen and Bellows-mender. His uniform is that of a Colonel in the Diddlesex Militia." There is no end to similar mistakes that day. The innocent guest mistakes for a Foreign Ambassador at the very least a venerable man in a blue and gold uniform, and a large crimson sword-belt and brass-scabbard sabre, who turns out to be only a Billingsgate Commissioner; while "a little fellow in a blue livery, which fitted him so badly that I thought he must be one of the hired waiters of the Company, who had been put into a coat that didn't belong to

him, turned out to be a real right honourable gent, who had been a minister once."

The Country Parson, with whose Recreations the reading world is so well acquainted, calls to mind, in one of his Leisure Hours in Town, how disappointed he was, as a boy, on first seeing the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was Archbishop Howley. There he was, a slender, pale old gentleman, sitting in an arm-chair at a public meeting. A. K. H. B. was chiefly disappointed because there was "so little" of him. "There was just the human being. There was no background of grand accessories." The idea of the Primate of England which the boy had in some confused manner in his mind, included, as he says, a vision of the venerable towers of Lambeth—of a long array of solemn predecessors, from Thomas à Becket downwards—of great historical occasions on which the Archbishop of Canterbury had been a prominent figure; and in some way he fancied, vaguely, that he should see the primate surrounded by all these things. Dr. Howley looked so small when seen in fact, because seen without these belongings. Such at least is Dr. Boyd's rationale of the matter. Byron comes much to the same thing, when he pictures the disappointment of the two Turkish ladies, "poor girls, with swimming eyes," at their first sight of Suwarrow:

——nor was their surprise
Less than their grief (and truly not less just)
To see an old man, rather wild than wise
In aspect, plainly clad, besmeared with dust,

Stripp'd to his waistcoat, and that not too clean,
More feared than all the Sultans ever seen.

For everything seem'd resting on his nod,
As they could read in all eyes. Now, to them,
Who were accustom'd, as a sort of God,
To see the Sultan, rich in many a gem,
Like an imperial peacock stalk abroad
(That royal bird, whose tail's a diadem),
With all the pomp of power, it was a doubt
How power could condescend to do without.

There is a perhaps not altogether imaginary old artist in one of Mr. Wilkie Collins's fictions, who, himself in looks and manner and disposition the gentlest of mankind, glories placidly in the wildest and most frightful range of subjects which his art is capable of representing. Whoever saw him at his easel, so neat and quiet, so modest and unpretending in himself, with so serene an aspect, and "with such a weak hand to guide such bold big brushes,"—and then looked at the "frightful canvasful of terrors" which he tranquilly aggravated in fierceness and intensity with every successive touch,—found it difficult to credit the connexion between the painter and his work. The Lives of Painters are not without a fair show of parallel passages, as regards discrepancy of some kind or other, and of course in all manner of degrees, between the *personnel* of the artist and the products of his art.

Southey, in one of his early letters, makes the following remark on Opie: "There is a strange contrast between his genius, which is not confined to

painting, and the vulgarity of his appearance,—his manners, and sometimes of his language."

Sir Martin Archer Shee, again, in one of *his* early letters, soon after his arrival in London in 1788, and describing certain artists, &c., to whom he bore letters of introduction, says of the same painter: "I have been introduced to Mr. Opie, who is in manners and appearance as great a clown and as stupid a looking fellow as ever I set my eyes on. Nothing but incontrovertible proof of the fact could force me to think him capable of anything above the sphere of a journeyman carpenter, so little, in this instance, has nature proportioned exterior grace to inward worth."

David Roberts reports of his first sight of J. M. W. Turner, that "my impression at the time was anything but what I had in my imagination formed of this great painter. . . . My astonishment on being told that it was 'The Great Turner,' almost without meaning a pun, turned my head." It is alleged, as the reason for Turner's reluctance to sit for his portrait, that he believed the public, on seeing what manner of man he looked like, would think less of his pictures. He might have been taken for the captain of a river steamer at first sight, says another fellow-artist; who, however, being a discerning spirit, is careful to add that a second would find far more in his face than belongs to any ordinary mind. A less discerning spirit, at any rate a less congenial one, describes Turner off-hand as a short, vulgar-looking man, with an ordinary head, and a coarse, red, "pimply" face, utterly devoid of any

degree of refinement or intelligence: "I cannot," adds Mr. Rippingille, "recollect any other clever man I ever saw who did not carry evidence of the fact in his face; Turner was the exception."

Mr. Gilchrist tells of Etty, during his course of study in the Louvre, that at first the French artists were amused by the unknown English painter's little insignificant figure, but soon exchanged that feeling for amazement, crying, "Who is he?" "Titian come to life again!" with similar demonstrations of excitement. But here a full stop will probably be too welcome to the reader for him to criticise it as too abrupt.

ABOUT PEOPLE WHO CAN'T SAY NO.

On the Princess Caroline of Brunswick's coming over to England to be wedded to the Prince of Wales, it was a matter of discussion at a party, where Lady Charlotte Lindsay was present,—so we read in Moore's Diary, on the authority of Lord Brougham, —what *one* word of English her Royal Highness, who was totally ignorant of the language, should be first taught to speak. The whole company agreed that "yes" was the most useful word, except Lady Charlotte, who suggested that "no" was twice as useful, as it so often stood for "yes." "This story Brougham said he once made use of in court, in commenting on the manner in which a witness had said 'no.' What suggested it to him, now," adds Moore, "was my describing the manner in which Grattan said, 'Why, no,' one day when Rogers asked him whether he and I could manage another bottle of claret." Not to name, with the deaf poet and humourist,

"——the mischievous quizzers,
Sharp as knives, but double as scissors,

> Who get you to answer quite by guess,
> Yes for No, and No for Yes.

Not to name, either, those high-polite colloquists who made Sir Philip Francis so wrathful,—he being wont to say that he had nearly survived the good manly words of assent and denial, the *yes* and *no* of our ancestors, and could now hear nothing but "unquestionably," "certainly," "undeniably," or "by no means," and "I rather think not;" forms of speech to which he gave the most odious and contemptible names, as effeminate and emasculated, and which he would turn into ridicule by caricaturing the pronunciation of the words.* It was in his appeal to Lord John Russell to have done with dexterity and finesse, and to cultivate rather "those fine manly historico-Russell qualities he most undoubtedly possesses," that Sydney Smith pointedly said: "There are two beautiful words in the English language,—Yes and No; he must pronounce them boldly and emphatically; stick to Yes and No to the death; for Yes and No lay his head down upon the scaffold, where his ancestors have laid their heads before, and cling to his Yes and No in spite of" political foes and flatterers all and sundry. What the pungent pamphleteer wanted Lord John,

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* "Thus he would drawl out 'unquestionably' in a faint, childish tone, and then say . . . [with an adjuration more emphatic than reverent] . . . 'does he mean *yes*? Then why not say so at once, like a man?'"—Statesmen of Time of George III., vol. iii., Sir Philip Francis.

on the present occasion, to say No to, like a man,—No, short and stern; No, rough and ready; No, pure and simple;—was the Ballot. For his lordship showed signs of dallying with the question; if not making it an open one; and was evidently suspected by his witty censor of a tendency to complacent acquiescence in the lax moral of the fabulist:—

> Sometimes in mutual sly disguise,
> Let Ay's seem No's, and No's seem Ay's;
> Ay's be in courts denials meant,
> And No's in Bishops give consent.

But Lady Charlotte Lindsay was probably right, in another sense than the one she smartly suggested, when she urged the advantage of learning to say No, especially to one of her Royal Highness's position and prospects. People who can't say No, are not uncommonly, in the long run, a burden to themselves and to others. Chamfort does not scruple to assert that nearly all men are bondsmen, for lack of the power to say No: to be able to articulate that momentous syllable distinctly, he accounts one of the two only means of preserving one's freedom and individual character—the other being a capacity for living alone in the world. "Presque tous les hommes sont esclaves, par la raison que les Spartiates donnaient de la servitude des Perses, faute de savoir prononcer la syllabe *non*. Savoir prononcer ce mot et savoir vivre seul, sont les deux seuls moyens de conserver sa liberté et son caractère." Goldsmith moralises on the mischievous results arising to young

people from the endeavour to please all, so that they comply with every request, and come to have no will of their own, but, like wax, catch every contiguous impression. So Johnson warns against the dangers of "timid compliance and tame resignation," whereby soft and fearful tempers give themselves up to the will of the more wilful, who get from them a facile or faltering Yes when the only safe and sound answer is a peremptory No.

Many, like Desdemona, are of "so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition," that they hold it a vice in their goodness not to do more than they are requested, even when the request itself is overmuch. Many, like that *bon bourgeois*, Chrysale, in the *Femmes Savantes*, say Yes as often as ever you please, while practically they make a mere negative of the prompt affirmative:

> Mon père est d'une humeur à consentir à tout;
> Mais il met peu de poids aux choses qu'il résout.

Chesterfield admonishes his son that there is commonly, in young people, a facility that makes them unwilling to refuse anything that is asked of them; a *mauvaise honte*, that makes them ashamed to refuse. Nearly a year later his lordship returns to the charge: "I have known many a young fellow seduced by a *mauvaise honte*, that made him ashamed to refuse." And yet again, a few weeks later: "A young fellow who seems to have no will of his own, and who does everything that is asked of him, is called a very good-natured, but at the

same time is thought a very silly fellow." Cicero pronounces this to be the first law to be established in friendship, that neither may we ask of others aught which is dishonourable, nor ourselves do it when asked: *Hæc prima lex in amicitiâ sanciatur, ut neque rogemus res turpes, nec faciamus rogati.*

Plutarch is presumed to have considered that the defect which he calls Dysopia (δυσωπία)—an unhappy facility of being put out of countenance—shamefacedness, in fact, or shyness—consists chiefly in the difficulty of saying No; and his stock of anecdotes is drawn upon in illustration of the tragic consequences which may result from that pusillanimous characteristic of Shyness. "It not only subjects us to the loss of our money when a slippery acquaintance asks us for a loan which we are perfectly aware he never intends to repay, but sometimes life itself is the penalty of that cowardly shyness which cannot say No to a disagreeable invitation." As in the case of Antipater invited to an entertainment by Demetrius, ashamed to decline, but going forebodingly to the shambles; and of Hercules, Alexander's son by Barsina, asked to supper (and killed at it) by Polysperchon. Young Hercules could excuse himself as long as Polysperchon did not urge his odious invitation in person. "Just like me!" professes the Caxton essayist on Shyness: "Send me an invitation to dinner to which I can reply by note or message, and if I wish to say 'No,' I can say it like a man; but invaded in my own house, or waylaid in the street, clapped on the shoulder,

accosted vigorously, with a hypocritical frankness, Fie, my dear sir—not dine with me? What are you afraid of? Do you think I shall give you the Gladstone claret?'—then Dysopia seizes me at once; I succumb like the son of Alexander. And every man entitled to call himself Shy, would, if similarly pressed, prove as weak as Hercules and I.

"Whole communities have been enslaved by shyness. Plutarch quotes the saying that the people of Asia only submitted to a single despot because they were too bashful to pronounce the word No."

Indeed, Lord Lytton charges us sturdy English, ourselves, with a fit of that cowardly but well-bred Dysopia on the Restoration of Charles II. It was shyness, he alleges, and nothing else, that made the bashful conquerors in the great rebellion so delicately silent about themselves in the welcome they gave to the courteous and elegant exile. They have no other excuse; or, as the author punningly puts it, "they were shy, and they shied away their liberties."

In another essay from his pen may be read an emphatic counsel to every young reader, be he patrician or plebeian, to say No at once to whatever charming acquaintance would coax him into putting his name to a bill. The worst that the "No" can inflict on its utterer, is a privation—a want—always short of starvation. So, "Be contented! Say No!" And manage to say it, as Lord Lytton writes it, with the emphasis and decision of a note of admiration, to back it, clinch it, drive it well and truly home.

Mr. Pepys enters approvingly in his Diary a "rule" or "proverb" he one day hears—to wit, that a man who "cannot say no (that is, that is of so good a nature that he cannot deny anything, or cross another in doing anything), is not fit for business." Which, adds self-scrutinising Samuel, "which is a very great fault of mine, which I must amend in." The historian of the Dutch Republic tells us of President Hopper—a mere man of routine, pliable as wax in the plastic hands of Margaret of Parma—that his manners were as cringing as his intellect was narrow, and that as he never by any chance opposed the Duchess, his colleagues in the council of state always called him Councillor *Yes Madam*—so inconceivable was it that he should ever articulate a wholesome but perhaps compromising No. He appears to have been a parallel personage to Pope's Phryne, in this one respect:

> Her learning and good-breeding such,
> Whether th' Italian or the Dutch,
> Spaniards or French came to her;
> To all obliging she'd appear:
> 'Twas *Si signor*, 'twas *Yaw Mynheer*,
> 'Twas *S'il vous plaist, Monsieur.*

Sir Walter Scott declares Henry Erskine to have been the best-natured man he ever knew, thoroughly a gentleman, and with but one fault—"he could not say no, and thus sometimes misled those who trusted him." In another entry in Sir Walter's diary, we find the expression of a wish that his girls—then with him at Portsmouth—and mad with the craze

of seeing sights, would be moderate in their demands on naval officers' complaisance. "They little know how inconvenient are such seizures. A sailor in particular is a bad refuser, and before he can turn three times round, he is bound by a triple knot to all sorts of nonsense." Scott was then about to embark for Italy; and it was on the eve of his return, still a shattered invalid, that being requested by a lady to do something that was specially disagreeable to him, and being asked whether he had consented, Scott replied "Yes." He was then questioned why he had agreed to do what was so inconvenient to him:—"Why," said he, "as I am now good for nothing else, I think it as well to be good natured." Moral: not till a man comes to be good for nothing else, is it excusable in him to be unable to say No.

Pertinent to the subject is what Sir Walter had long before said of the then youthful Duke of Buccleugh, whose guest he was in 1826; that he would have him not quite so soft natured as his grandfather, whose kindness sometimes mastered his excellent understanding. "His father had a temper which jumped better with my humour. Enough of ill nature to keep your good nature from being abused, is no bad ingredient in their disposition who have favours to bestow."

Lord Byron, when on the Drury Lane Committee, found his reluctance to say No, to eager petitioners, a highly inconvenient disposition, and was only too thankful to transfer the duty to a better qualified

friend. "As I am really a civil and polite person," he writes, "and *do* hate giving pain when it can be avoided, I sent them up to Douglas Kinnaird,—who is a man of business, and sufficiently ready with a negative."—The late Dr. Andrew Combe used often to comment on the shallow friendship of a class of people who are friendly only when they want a favour; but he was himself their victim notwithstanding, and would rate himself for allowing them to "accomplish their objects at his expense, especially as he understood them perfectly, and was not taken by surprise by their demands; but he felt it difficult to say 'nay,' to a person who unhesitatingly threw himself on his good nature for a kindness." How inscrutable to this type of mind must be the letter and spirit of a sentence of La Bruyère's: "La chose la plus prompte, et qui se présente d'abord, c'est le refus; et l'on n'accorde que par réflexion."

To withstand solicitations for loans is often, observes Sir Henry Taylor, a great trial of firmness: the refusal which he pronounces to be at once the most safe from vacillation, and perhaps as little apt to give offence as any, is the point blank refusal, without reasons assigned. "Acquiescence is more easily given in the decisions of a strong will, than in reasons, which weak men, under the bias of self-love, will always imagine themselves competent to controvert." Do not, Mr. Arthur Helps advises, resort to evasive answers for the purpose only of bringing the interview to a close; nor shrink from giving a distinct denial, merely because the person to whom

you ought to give it is before you, and you would have to witness any pain which it might occasion. Crabbe's

> William was kind and easy; he complied
> With all requests, or grieved when he denied;

still it was to William's credit, and comfort, ultimately, that on occasion he could deny, and did. A contrast, so far, to Goldsmith's too Good-natured Man, of whom, to Sir William Honeywood's puzzled query, "Money! how is he able to supply others, who has scarce any for himself?" the old steward gives this explanatory account: "Why, there it is; he has no money, that's true; but then, as he never said No to any request in his life, he has given them a bill," &c., &c.,—we know all about the sequel, of course,—the inevitable bailiffs included.

Inability to say No is indicated as a main cause of the ruined fortunes of Newman Noggs, as that indigent creature is exhibited to us by Mr. Dickens,—No, being a word which in all his life he had never said at the right time, either to himself or to any one else.

Even Owen Feltham, who, in opposition to what we have seen recommended by Sir Henry Taylor, insists that to a friend one ought never to give a simple denial; but always either to grant him his request, or give a good reason why one cannot,—allows that a refusal is deserved when the request is either unfitting, or inconvenient. Easy counsel always, hard practice sometimes. When a man whom you call friend, pleads one of Lord Lytton's

young heroes,—a man whom you walk with, ride with, dine with almost every day, says to you, "I am in immediate want of a few hundreds—I don't ask you to lend them to me, perhaps you can't—but assist me to borrow—trust to my honour, that the debt shall not fall on you," why, then, if you refuse this favour, is it not to tell the man you call friend that you doubt his honour? Lionel fairly confesses that, for his part, though he has been caught once in that way, he feels that he must be caught very often before he shall have the moral courage to say "No." And Lionel's friend, the sage and experienced Colonel, then relates for his young friend's instruction and warning, the disastrous history of "Gentleman Waife," who, "like you, my dear Lionel, had not the courage to say "No,'"—and thereby came to grief, if not (to use another idiom of expressive slang) went to the bad.

Mark Robarts, in one of Mr. Anthony Trollope's plurality of clerical novels, ever remembers with a pang that evening in Sowerby's bedroom, at the Duke of Omnium's, when the bill had been brought out, and he had allowed himself to be persuaded to put his name upon it; not because he was willing in this way to assist his friend, but because he was unable to refuse. "He had lacked the courage to say 'No,' though he knew at the time how gross was the error which he was committing. He had lacked the courage to say 'No,' and hence had come upon him and on his household all this misery and cause for bitter repentance."

Lord Lytton pictures in Mr. Digby an only son—a spoiled child—brought up as "a gentleman," who enters a very expensive regiment, wherein he finds himself, at his father's death, "with four thousand pounds, and the incapacity to say 'No.'" Altogether, the easiest, gentlest, best-tempered fellow whom that incapacity ever—and how many it has—led astray. According to Douglas Jerrold's biographer, had that popular writer, in his early days, "possessed the bravery to steel his heart once or twice, and hiss [*sic*] a decided No, he had been a happier man during many years of his life. . . . Once or twice he says '*yes*'—writes all that that '*yes*' implies; his friends have his bond—and he some years of hard struggling before him."

Richardson pictures in William Wilson a man ruined for life, materially and morally, by an incapacity for saying No. This fellow is Sir Hargrave Pollexfen's agent in the abduction of Miss Byron; and when penitent for that offence, and making a clean breast of it, he describes his parentage as honest, his education as above his parentage, and himself as setting out with good principles, but falling into a bad service. "I was young, and of a good natural disposition; but had not virtue enough to resist a temptation: I could not say 'No' to an unlawful thing," &c.

That is a neat touch on Steele's part, when he makes a crafty old cit say of an over-easy too compliant youngster, just starting well in Lombard-street, "I will lay no more money in his hands, *for*

he never denied me anything." Sir Richard himself came of the same sort as this always-in-the-affirmative youngster, and suffered many things of many people from the life-long difficulty he found in saying No.

Marcellus, we read in Plutarch, was from his childhood a friend of Cato's, and a good questor, while he acted with him; but when acting alone, Marcellus was "too much influenced by personal regards for petitioners, and by a natural inclination to oblige." Accordingly, on one occasion, when Marcellus, in Cato's absence, was induced to make an order for large sums from the treasury, at the solicitation of petitioners who knew his weak side. Cato had to return to the city in hot haste, and cancel the other's Yes by his own indomitable, inexorable No. Cato's distinguished son-in-law, Marcus Brutus, was moulded of the same sterner stuff. No flattery, says Plutarch, could induce him to attend to unjust petitions; and though that ductility of mind which may be wrought upon by the impudence of importunity, is by some called good nature, he considered it as the greatest disgrace. He would have had as little liking for Ovid's line, about the propriety of being gently obsequious and yielding to entreaties, as for Ovid himself:

Mollis in obsequium facilisque rogantibus esses.

Secretary Craggs used to relate of himself that, when he first came into office, he made it a rule to tell every person who applied to him for a favour

the exact truth; that he was either engaged to give the place in question to some one else, or if that were not the case, that he could not possibly promise the office, as other persons with superior pretensions might have a claim to it. But "he found by experience that this method rendered him universally odious; and that the only way of being popular, is—whether you comply with men's solicitations or not—to soothe them with hopes and fair speeches."

The Duke of Marlborough is said to have had the enviable art of refusing more gracefully than other people could grant; and those who went away from him most dissatisfied, as to the substance of their business, were yet personally charmed with him, and in some degree comforted by his manner. He showed (not to say shoved) them down stairs with so winning a grace, that they thought he was handing them up. His No flattered and elevated you more than many a man's Yes. No wonder my Lord Chesterfield so much admired this one among the duke's many accomplishments, and urged the importance of it upon his son's particular attention. He lavishes notes of admiration on this grace *not* beyond the reach of art. "In business [high, official, diplomatic, and the like] how prevalent [that is, prevailing; not, by any means, how common] are the graces! how detrimental the want of them! By the help of these, I have known some men refuse favours less offensively than others granted them. The utility of them in courts and negotiations is inconceivable."

The historian of the Conquest of Peru tells us that Pizarro was in the habit of saying "No," at first, to applicants for favour; and that afterwards, at leisure, he would revise his judgment, and grant what seemed to him expedient. "He took the opposite course from his comrade Almagro, who, it was observed, generally said 'Yes,' but too often failed to keep his promise." Well may Archdeacon Coxe signalise the "singular courtesy" of the Emperor Maximilian II., who "possessed the rare talent of never dismissing his petitioners dissatisfied." The imperial No was more musical than many a rough-and-ready Yes. A commentator on the results of the last General Election reprobates the mean exhibition of a candidate cringing and crouching, and appearing to assent to every query; experience proving that there is much more safety in "No," boldly pronounced, than is supposed.

What a treasure to a cabinet minister was that John Robarts, commemorated by Mr. Trollope,—who, as private secretary, could manage to write to every applicant for the great man's patronage such a letter as should refuse every such applicant what he asked for, and yet leave him pleased and happy. "That must be difficult," surmises an outsider. "Difficult is no word for it," replies the secretary: "But, after all, it consists chiefly in the knack of the thing. One must have the wit 'from such a sharp and waspish word as No to pluck the sting.' I do it every day, and I really think that the people like it."

Mrs. Stowe's Aunt Nesbit is a type—in small type, to be sure—of the weak and selfish people whose inability to say No endears them to nobody, so worthless is the motive and the manner of their saying Yes. "She seldom refused favours that were urged with any degree of importunity; not because her heart was touched, but simply because she seemed not to have force enough to refuse; and whatever she granted was always followed by a series of subdued lamentations over the necessity which had wrung them from her." A sufficient contrast to the equally compliant but more amiable islanders of Hayti, as Columbus found them,—remarking, as he does of them *en masse*, that "if anything was asked of them, they never said No, but rather gave it cheerfully, and showed as much amity as if they gave their very hearts." Most various, indeed, are the phases of character which from some constitutional peculiarity or other can give no denial. It is one of the counts in Macaulay's indictment against Torrington—in recording the earl's trial and acquittal in A.D. 1690—that "he could not say No to a boon companion or to a mistress." Historians divers and diverse pity Lewis the Fourteenth for his impotency to utter with emphasis and discretion the same monosyllable. Horace Walpole, again, affects to pity the pusillanimity of George the Third, "which could not say *No* to a man's face"—an assertion scarcely to be taken without reserve, by latter-day students of the career of Farmer George. Ducis, *l'honnête Ducis*, plumed himself on having

once and again, in the course of his life, uttered a *No* in a firm voice, and as though he meant it. "Ma fierté naturelle est assez satisfaite de quelques *Non* bien fermes que j'ai prononcés dans ma vie." Coleridge might have been a happier man, and a more useful, could he have "pronounced" *quelques Non* equally firm though equally rare. Southey says of him, in a letter to a brother of Kirke White, "From Coleridge I could, without difficulty, procure you a promise, but am very certain that such a promise would end in nothing. His good nature would render it impossible to refuse, and his habits would render it still more impossible for him to perform what he had thus incautiously pledged himself to do." Coleridge himself had, in very early life, avowed to Joseph Cottle his weakness in this respect. He says, "Indeed I want firmness—I perceive I do. I have that within me which makes it difficult to say No!" &c. &c. Sydney Smith, in an apologetic epistle to Jeffrey, declares of himself, "I have such a dislike to say No, to anybody who does me the real pleasure and favour of asking me to come and see him, that I assent, when I know that I am not quite sure of being able to carry my good intentions into execution; and so I am considered uncertain and capricious, when I really ought to be called friendly and benevolent." However, the vicar of Foston promises to mind his manners in future, and study a clear and correct pronunciation of that difficult little word No.

M. de Sainte-Beuve says of Fénelon that "evidem-

ment il n'avait pas cette irritabilité de bon sens et de raison qui fait dire *Non* avec véhémence." Sir Charles Grandison flattered himself that *he* knew how to say the word so as rather to charm than offend the ear. "By how many ways, my dear Dr. Bartlett, may delicate minds express a denial!—Negatives need not be frowningly given," pleads Sir Charles, with his best-bred simper. But we are not all of us Grandisons; and for the most part find an agreeable emission of the refractory monosyllable hardly more easy than the two ladies did in Sir Henry Taylor's dramatic romance; where Clara bids Adriana

> ——ponder well
> What you shall say; for if it must be "no"
> In substance, you shall hardly find that form
> Which shall convey it pleasantly.

Adriana on her part confessing, by way of reply, that

> ——In truth,
> To mould denial to a pleasing shape . . .
> Is a hard task! alas, I have not wit
> From such a sharp and waspish word as "no"
> To pluck the sting.

There are human beings, of a demonstrative and exaggerative sort, French and others, who have a habit of saying, on very slight occasions, and when only a mild negative is really called for, *Mille fois Non!* A very puzzle must the folks who are always saying a thousand times No! be to those who for the life of them can't say it once.

TOO STRANGE FOR FICTION, NOT TOO STRANGE TO BE TRUE.

WHEN the merrily malicious conspirators in "Twelfth Night" have succeeded, to the top of their bent, in befooling Malvolio, and making him go all lengths in extravagant conceit, one of them, Sir Toby, almost doubts his own eyes, while another, Fabian, protests that, were the thing produced in a play, it would seem too utterly improbable for acceptance. "Is't possible?" is Sir Toby Belch's incredulous exclamation, his note of admiration and interrogation in one, at the preposterous procedure of my lady's steward. And Fabian's equal amusement and amazement find vent in the assertion,

"If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction."

Hermione, in the "Winter's Tale," recounting her wrongs before the king her husband's high court of justice, declares them to be so great, that, in effect, they too, if played upon a stage, might be condemned as a too improbable fiction. Her present unhappiness, she asserts, is

——more
Than history can pattern, though devised
And play'd, to take spectators.

Shakspeare's Duke of Norfolk, again, in his description of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and of the presence and prowess there of "the two kings, equal in lustre," works it up to this climax:

——When these suns
(For so they phrase them) by their heralds challenged
The noble spirits to arms, they did perform
Beyond thought's compass; that former fabulous story,
Being now seen possible enough, got credit,
That Bevis was believed.
Buckingham. O, you go far.
Nor. As I belong to worship, and affect
In honour honesty, the tract of everything
Would by a good discourser lose some life,
Which action's self was tongue to.

To apply Horatio's exclamation:

Before my God, I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

And, once more, in the honestly indignant remonstrance of Lodovico against what he witnesses, but scarce can credit, of Othello's brutality to the gentle lady married to that Moor:

My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw it.

Ben Jonson, in his "Catiline," introduces Cicero and Fulvia in conference about the conspiracy—and

thus the consul is made to address his confidante—informant and informer in one—in his utter amazement at the atrocious designs she is come to reveal:

> Sit down, good lady; Cicero is lost
> In this your fable: for, to think it true
> Tempteth my reason, it so far exceeds
> All insolent fictions of the tragic scene.

Another passage of Jonson's, that runs closely parallel with the Shakspearean sentence touching Malvolio, is that in which Peregrine is made to say, aside, of Sir Politick Would-be,

> ——O; this knight,
> Were he well known, would be a precious thing
> To fit our English stage: he that should write
> But such a fellow, should be thought to feign
> Extremely, if not maliciously.

There is a Mr. B—y who figures in Madame d'Arblay's Diary, of whom this passage serves to remind us—Fanny Burney getting by her own account absolutely ill with laughing at this gentleman: he "half convulses" her; his extreme absurdities "are so much more like some pragmatical old coxcomb represented on the stage, than like anything in real and common life, that I think, were I a man, I should sometimes be betrayed into clapping him for acting so well. As it is, I am sure no character in any comedy I ever saw has made me laugh more extravagantly." Maybe, had the lady noticed that the old gentleman's name began and ended with the same letters as her own, she would have found some other

patronymic for him (as she did in other instances), lest by any possibility what Artemus Ward would call so "ridiklus an old cuss" should be taken for one of her family.

Little old Lady Lovat, as good a creature as her husband was the other way, used to like to talk to whole tribes of her grand-nephews and grand-nieces about her vicissitudes and trials, and would say to them, "I dare say, bairns, the events of my life would make a good *novelle;* but they have been of so strange a nature, that nobody would believe them." There are some lines of Mr. Disraeli's written as if by Byron, in the romance which is designed to paint the characters and careers of him and Shelley:

> My tale is truth: imagination's range
> Its bounds exact may touch not: to discern
> Far stranger things than poets ever feign,
> In life's perplexing annals, is the fate
> Of those who act, and musing, penetrate
> The mystery of Fortune.

Crabbe expresses his wonder at the unlife-like pictures that most books give of life. The authors copy one another, instead of what they might see and hear all around them, had they but the eyes and ears for it:

> Life, if they'd search, would show them many a change;
> The ruin sudden, and the misery strange!
> With more of grievous, base, and dreadful things,
> Than novelists relate or poet sings.

Adverting to a curious concatenation of curious

incidents, historically a fact, La Bruyère affirms that were any one to relate the circumstances to him as they really happened, "je regarderais cet événement comme l'une de ces choses dont l'histoire se charge, et à qui le tems ôte la croyance." Lord Chesterfield, in one of his letters, thus appraises Mr. Carlyle's crowned hero of the eighteenth century: "Let the pedants, whose business it is to believe lies, or the poets, whose trade it is to invent them, match the King of Prussia with a hero in ancient or modern story, if they can. He disgraces history, and makes one give some credit to romance. Calprenede's Juba does not now seem so absurd as formerly." This was penned in 1758. Ten years previously, his lordship had made a similar remark, on the subject of certain eccentricities of personal character. "This sounds too ridiculous and *outré*, almost for the stage; and yet, take my word for it, you will frequently meet with it upon the common stage of the world. And here I will observe, by-the-bye, that you will often meet with characters in nature so extravagant, that a discreet poet would not venture to set them upon the stage in their true and high colouring."

Horace Walpole's letters contain numerous comments to the same effect. As where, recording some trifles of fashionable life and manners, this eager snapper-up of all such unconsidered trifles, goes on to say: "These would be features for Comedy, if they would not be thought caricatures, but to-day I am possessed of a genuine paper, that I believe I

shall leave to the Museum, and which, though its object will, I suppose, to-morrow become record, cannot be believed authentic an hundred years hence. It would, in such a national satire as Gulliver, be deemed too exaggerated." (All this was about Lord Foley and his brother having petitioned the House of Lords to set aside their father's will, as it seems he intended to have raised £100,000 to pay their debts, but died before he could execute the intention.) Then again, in an epistle to the Countess of Ossory, some three years later, Walpole writes: "I had not heard that anecdote of Cunningham. It is one of those traits, that whatever is said of comedy, nay of the exaggeration of farce, would be too strong for the stage. The bombast passion of a lover in a romance might be carried to such an excess: but a governor writing on the ruins of a whole island levelled by that most fatal of all hurricanes, that his chief misery was the loss of—what?—his bracelets with the portraits of his idols—who would dare to bring such a revolting hyperbole on the stage?" It was twelve years afterwards, and amid the political throes of the French Revolution, that Horace thus addressed another lady-correspondent—in her young days the constant companion of the Garricks, and a sprightly *habituée* of fashionable circles—to wit, Miss Hannah More: "Oh! have not the last five years brought to light such infernal malevolence, such monstrous crimes, as mankind had grown civilised enough to disbelieve when they read anything similar in former ages? if, indeed, anything similar has

been recorded."—It was another French Revolution, the one of 1848, that the late Samuel Phillips called a *pièce historique*, a play with entirely new scenes and decorations, and performed, it might be truly said, by the whole strength of the company. No work of fiction coming from the pen of the prolific Dumas, the *Times*' essayist asserted—opposed as the brilliant *roman* may seem to probability and nature—reads half so like a tale of purest fiction as the performance in question. "Incongruous as are the scenes, characters, and incidents which that dashing writer brings into his framework, the incongruity looks perfectly symmetrical, by the side of the desperately conflicting and wonderfully opposite events that crowd into the drama under consideration. Dumas is the prince of inventors, but in the height of his audacity he has stopped short of the daring creation which the pen of simple truth has alone authority to write. In his wildest flights the novelist would never have conceived such a programme, as that which history enables us to place before him." The French Revolution, No. I., nevertheless, has commanded, as well it might, first and last, the greatest sum of these notes of admiration. Sir Samuel Romilly, with his exceptionally calm intellect, declares in one of his letters, that "if such facts as have appeared in the course of the French Revolution were to be found in Herodotus, they would be set to the account only of his credulity and his love of the marvellous." Lord Dudley, in 1815, pronounced the return of Bonaparte, and his uninter-

rupted triumphal march to the throne, the most romantic and amazing piece of true history to be met with in the annals of the world; "what, I confess, would a month ago have appeared to me too extravagant for a dream." His lordship might have applied to the event the lines of a French classic,

> ——puisqu'en cet exploit tout paraît incroyable,
> Que la vérité pure y ressemble à la fable,

et cætera; or rather, *cætera desint,*—that what is impertinent in Boileau's sequel may give place to a pertinent meditation of Wordsworth's:

> ——Verily, the world of dreams,
> Where mingle, as for mockery combined,
> Things in their very essences at strife,
> Shows not a sight incongruous as the extremes
> That everywhere, before the thoughtful mind,
> Meet on the solid ground of waking life.

In one of his letters from Ostend, Thomas Hood (the elder) says, "If I were but to put into a novel what passes here, what an outrageous work it would seem!"—A clever and earnest-minded writer, said Mr. Thackeray of the author of "London Labour and the London Poor," gets a commission from the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper, and reports upon the state of our poor; the result being "a picture of life so wonderful, so awful, so piteous and pathetic, so exciting and terrible, that readers of romances own they never read anything like it." It was with no

great stretch of poetical licence that the poet ventured on this averment:

> I do declare, upon an affidavit,
> Romances I ne'er read like those I've seen;
> Nor, if unto the world I ever gave it,
> Would some believe that such a tale had been.

M. Frédéric Soulié affects a touch of *vraisemblance* when, describing the success of a certain *habile manœuvre*, he says of the performer of it, "qu'il l'eût trouvée de la dernière sottise s'il l'avait lue le matin dans un feuilleton." Henry Mackenzie touches the opposite extreme, when he takes occasion to say, in his story of the decline and fall of that "unfortunate young man," Annesly, that, "if my tale were fiction, it would be thought too simple." "I never mix truth and fiction," writes Fanny Burney in a confidential letter: "I never in all my life have been a sayer of the thing that is not, and now I should be not only a knave but a fool also, in so doing, as I have other purposes for imaginary characters than filling letters with them. . . . But, however, the world, and especially the great world, is so filled with absurdity of various sorts . . . . that there is no occasion for invention to draw what is striking in every possible species of the ridiculous." "This world," exclaims Cowper, in one of *his* letters, "is a scene of marvellous events, many of them more marvellous than fiction itself would dare to hazard;" and he is writing from personal impression at the time, and thanks Heaven—on the strength of it—

that these marvels are not all of the distressing kind.

What incident, short of physical impossibility, Hartley Coleridge demands, could a novel or romance-writer devise, which might not be found not only in former novels and romances, but in the annals of real life?

And the novel and romance-writer in general take quite the same view, and some of them enforce it with a power of iteration. Theodore Hook, for one, is mightily addicted to "ventilation" of the remark. "I have always thought, and not-unfrequently said" (his Maxwell is the speaker), "that the romance of real life is more filled with extraordinary events than the mind of the poet or the fabulous historian would imagine." And this observation is supposed to be made à propos of a combination of circumstances, jumbling him and his friends together, "so far beyond the belief of common-place people, that, if it were written in a book, the reader would call it, if not impossible, at least too improbable to appear the least natural." Hook was particularly fond of working up improbabilities of this sort into his stories; and not less eager to assert his fictions to be founded strictly on fact, than later story-tellers are. In another tale he proffers the assurance to his readers, that although some of the incidents he relates may appear to matter-of-fact folk "somewhat romantic, they are nevertheless copied from nature, and will be found upon inquiry to be only some of those 'curious coincidences' which daily occur to

every one of us, upon which we always exclaim, 'If *this* were put into a novel, it would be called improbable and absurd.'" So again, in another of his stories, after detailing an absurd *vivâ voce* examination, in which three spoilt children expose their ignorance to a degree of the ridiculous that is sublime, the author interposes the monition, "If this examination were written to meet the public eye, the reader would fancy the absurdities too gross to bear even the semblance of probability; nevertheless, I have put down this portion of it *verbatim* from the lips of the hopeful children," &c.—Haji Baba in England takes note of a variety of every-day facts there which he knows will be scouted as preposterous fictions in his own country. No marvel escapes his observant eye; but he agrees with his chief, at every fresh note-taking, that in vain he writes, in vain they may take oaths, they will find no one in Persia to believe them, no not one. And were the travelled pair to work up their veritable experiences into a romance, Persian critics and Persian public united would agree to condemn it as a clumsy because too improbable fiction.

Cicero's oration in defence of Cluentius, a Roman knight, of high family and large fortune, charged with poisoning his father-in-law, Oppianicus, who, a few years earlier, had been tried and banished for an attempt to poison *him*,—is said by Middleton to lay open a scene of such complicated villainy, by poisonings, murderings, incest, the subornation of

witnesses, and the corrupting of judges, as the poets themselves have never feigned in any one family.

The historian of the Conquest of Mexico, in the chapter which treats of the seizure of Montezuma by the Spaniards, and of concurrent events "certainly some of the most extraordinary on the page of history," pronounces them in effect too extraordinary for fiction. That a small body of men, like the Spaniards, he says, should have entered the palace of a mighty prince, have seized his person in the midst of his vassals, and have borne him off a captive to their quarters—that they should have put his high officers to an ignominious death before his face, for executing probably his own commands, and have crowned the whole by putting the monarch in irons like a common malefactor—that this should have been done, not to a drivelling dotard in the decay of his fortunes, but to a proud sovereign in the plenitude of his power, in the very heart of his capital, surrounded by thousands and tens of thousands who trembled at his nod, and would have poured out their blood like water in his defence—that all this should have been done by a mere handful of adventurers, is a thing, Mr. Prescott declares, "too extravagant, altogether too improbable, for the pages of romance. It is, nevertheless, literally true." In another place he quotes the veteran soldier, Diaz, who observes of the hardships encountered by the followers of Cortes, that to recount them all would but exhaust the reader's patience, and make him fancy he was perusing the incredible feats of a knight-

errant of romance. Then again Mr. Prescott himself iterates the comment, on the incursion of the Spaniards, to assail the Aztecs in the very zenith of their prosperity, and blot them out from the map of nations for ever,—"the whole story has the air of fable rather than of history! a legend of romance,—a tale of the genii!" Once again, towards the close of his sixth book, the historian sums up the marvels of the Conquest, and repeats the comment: "That all this should have been so effected by a mere handful of indigent adventurers, is in fact little short of the miraculous, too startling for the probabilities of fiction, and without a parallel in the pages of history."

Churchill takes upon him to declare the reign of James II. to have been

> ——So glaring an offence,
> In every step 'gainst freedom, law, and sense . . .
> That the relation would mere fiction seem,
> The mock creation of a poet's dream;
> And the poor bards would, in this sceptic age,
> Appear as false as *their** historian's page.

Some years ago a story went the round of the papers, which, as was remarked at the time, if not originally due to the fancy of a penny-a-liner, had something ghastly and terrible in it. A Frenchman was said to have laid a wager with a companion that he would shoot himself, and the stake was a pot of

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* By *their*, italicised in the original, the Stuart sovereigns apparently are meant.

beer. "The circumstances of the bet made it necessary that the winner should enjoy his winnings before he gained the wager. A pot of beer was called for at the expense of his companion—he drank it, went up-stairs, put a pistol to his head, and expired in an instant." So ran the story. In real life, reflection prevents suicide, observes an essayist on that subject; and he refers to the hero in Mr. Thurstan's "Passionate Pilgrim," who is made the vehicle of a discussion on the position of a man on finding every worldly interest entirely, suddenly, and permanently taken away from him. "It is difficult to convey the impression of this in fiction, because it is so improbable that it should exist in fact." Still Mr. Thurstan manages to inspire a belief in the credibility of his narrative. As regards the pot of French beer story,—the hero of *that* is held to stand a little apart, a rather prominent type of a state of mind which is, however, a common result of all civilisation. The novelists of modern France are shown to have represented in every possible light that phase of human action, due to a decomposing society, when the virtue of women is treated as the dream of boys, and life is valued at twopennyworth of bad beer. So pervading are these thoughts, that French novels, adds the essayist, are apt to be constructed on a pattern monotonously the same. "But truth is often stranger than fiction, and art should gather resources from every quarter. What a *coup* it would be if some writer of romance were to take a hint from this newspaper story, and introduce a love-

scene of appropriate passion and violence between the pot of beer and the explosion of the pistol!"

In the course of the above essay, the writer had declared that the savages of a Pacific island could scarcely make lighter of chastity and existence than the inhabitants, as painted by the novelists, of the first continental city of civilised and Christian Europe. A fellow-essayist on social subjects, in a chapter on Middle Class Morality in England itself, quoted certain then recent and notorious revelations of the Divorce Court, as representing a tableau of life in London the reverse of edifying. "Mr. and Mrs. Archer and Balls the cad," "Mr. and Mrs. Allen,"—why, even in the cheap and nasty literature of the slums, "the notion of an omnibus conductor sporting a diamond ring worth £150, and getting up a *liaison* with a married 'lady' who keeps her phaeton and pair, is something too preposterous even to read about; but here in a single week are two proved marriages with nymphs of the Haymarket." "All we can say is, that dirty fiction in its wildest extravagance, or in its most Parisian development, never invented a fable half so foul or so improbable as that of a man marrying an unvestal wife, living himself in systematic adultery, and palming off a copper captain, who strongly resembles a waiter in a casino, for the purpose of getting up a collusive adultery as the cheapest approach to the Divorce Court." The history of the diamond ring was said to be told as if nothing out of the common, though poor Marie Antoinette's case of the diamond

necklace is ten times less improbable; and our critic added that the free and easy way in which the heroines of the Arabian Nights pick up porters and calenders is not a more startling innovation on one's experience than the adventures of Mrs. Archer. An ounce of civet from some good apothecary were welcome here, to cleanse one's imagination.

In the autumn of 1862 the "leading" journal "led" off a "leader" on the topic of the Roupell forgeries, by adverting to the production, a few years previously, by one of our popular novelists, of a tale called "Aspen Court; a Story of our own Time;" a good story, too; full of all kinds of plots for the retention and recovery of property, and involving strange vicissitudes of rights and wrongs for the entertainment of the reader. But the fiction was declared to be now beaten outright by reality—the story of Aspen House as told at the Guildford Assizes throwing the story of "Aspen Court" quite into the shade. "When Mr. Shirley Brooks reads the account of what happened at a real Aspen House, in the very noonday of our own time—that is to say, on the 12th of September, 1856*—he will, we are sure, be one of the first to acknowledge that no writer of fiction could ever have ventured on a narrative so improbable."† So true as to have become a truism,

* Just about six years before the trial.

† "The trial itself, too, is as wonderful as the story in which it originated. We should doubt if any lawyer of any age ever saw a case so supported as that placed in the hands of Mr. Serjeant Shee."—*Times*, Aug. 20, 1862.

and that of the tritest, is the satirical poet's stanza beginning,

> 'Tis strange,—but true; for Truth is always strange,
> Stranger than Fiction: if it could be told,
> How much would novels gain by the exchange!
> How differently the world would men behold!

Racine was writing like his courtly self, when he glorified in his preface to "Athalie," a prince of eight years, of such super-eminent gifts and graces that, protests the poet, "si j'avais donné au petit Joas la même vivacité et le même discernement qui brillent dans les reparties de ce jeune prince, on m'aurait accusé avec raison d'avoir péché contre les règles de la vraisemblance." In his appendix of notes to "Peveril of the Peak," Sir Walter Scott narrates at some length the career of Colonel Blood, and closes his narrative with the remark, "Such were the adventures of an individual, whose real exploits, whether the motive, the danger, or the character of the enterprises be considered, equal, or rather surpass those fictions of violence and peril which we love to peruse in romance."—Our illustrations are purposely heterogeneous; so to Scott's comment upon Colonel Blood succeeds a remark of John Newton upon experience of his own. That reputedly hard, severe divine was in love once upon a time; and in those days he used to go all the way from London to Shooter's Hill, in order to look towards the part in which the future Mrs. Newton then lived; not that he could see the spot,

even after travelling all those miles, for she lived far beyond the range of vision from the hill itself; but it gratified him, he assured a friend in after life, to be able to so much as look towards the spot, and this he did always once, and sometimes twice a week. "Why," said the friend, "this is more like one of the vagaries of romance than real life." "True," replied Mr. Newton, "but real life has extravagancies, that would not be admitted to appear in a well-written romance—they would be said to be out of nature."

And such non-admission is justified in all provinces of Art* by duly approved canons of criticism.

* It would be interesting, but would lead us too far afield, to treat in this place of the painter's particular interest in the general question. Clew Bay was seen by Mr. Thackeray at sunset, and he tells us of Clare Island, as he then saw it, that "the edges were bright cobalt, while the middle was lighted up with a brilliant scarlet tinge, such as I would have laughed at in a picture, never having seen in nature before." (Irish Sketch-book, ch. xx.)

Many have been the laughers—with none of Mr. Thackeray's title to laugh—at colouring of Turner's, which Turner had copied with bold exactness from nature.

When first Wordsworth gazed on "that famous hill, the sacred Engelberg," he saw what inspired him to pen the lines beginning,

> "For gentlest uses, oft-times Nature takes
> The work of Fancy from her willing hands;
> And such a beautiful creation makes
> As renders needless spells and magic wands,
> And for the boldest tale belief commands."

WORDSWORTH, *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent.*

But the topic is too large to be more than touched in passing, and off at that tangent.

A masterly writer of the day, in the preface to one of his stories, asserts that the incidents which his critics have denounced as unnatural, are true, and that those which they commend as probable are mere figments of his own. The statement is, of course, remarks one of these critics, to be received, but it by no means answers the objection to which it is intended as a reply. Fiction, it is contended, should not emulate the "*strangeness* of truth;"—for Art essentially requires congruity, and should eschew what shocks the feeling of reasonable likelihood. *Lusus naturæ* are, in a certain sense, natural; but to describe them, however faithfully, would not be to 'hold the mirror up to nature.'" Applying this canon of criticism to a novel of Mr. Lester's, a Saturday Reviewer observes, that, putting aside the author's doctrines of the evil eye, and magnetic fascination, there is no incident in his story which can be pronounced absolutely impossible—only they are far too improbable and exceptional to enter legitimately into a tale of real life and modern society.*

That is a subtle stroke of La Bruyère's, where, in his portraiture of *Straton*, he stops to correct himself after saying that his life is a romance,—"Sa vie est un roman: non, *il lui manque le vraisemblable.* . . . Que dis-je? on ne rêve point comme il a vécu."

* "If he desire to carry his readers with him, he should deal with events, agencies, and influences which they can take for granted without violent straining."—*Sat. Rev.*, 169, p. 105.

The weak part, some critics allege, in Mr. Wilkie Collins's plots, is that he relies too much upon startling and improbable coincidences. "Le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable." The most remarkable coincidences may, it is admitted, be found in real life; but when coincidences happen in shoals, one's faith in the novelist's conceptions becomes somewhat weakened. "There is such a thing as economy in the free use of improbabilities, and though odd things do occur in the world, they do not keep on occurring to the same people every other day." But the story of "Armadale" is charged with hinging almost entirely on miraculous combinations, the arithmetical chances against which are infinite.

Gray complains of the *Nouvelle Heloïse*—the six volumes of which he read during a three weeks' confinement to the house, from a severe cold, which left him "nothing better to do"—that although there is no one event in that romance which might not happen any day of the week (separately taken) in any private family; yet are these events so put together that the series of them is more absurd and more improbable than Amadis de Gaul. Bishop Hurd, in one of his letters, approves the accepted saying, that an ordinary romance is more *probable* than the best history.

Truth beats fiction all the world over, observes Mr. Eagles, in an essay which freely allows that more extraordinary things happen than imagination can well conceive, and happen every day too,

in all cities, in all villages, and in most families. But then, as he proceeds to show, they often are the result of progressive action, and intermixed with every-day proceedings, and are not therefore collected at once, and to the immediate point of their oddity, or of their pathos. "The novelist, the tragedian, and the comedian, by the mere power of separation and omission, of all that does not bear upon the chief incident to be enforced, excite in us most wonderful emotion; but only so long as they keep within the bounds of nature." It is no uncommon mistake, as John Sterling has pointed out, to suppose that exaggeration is essential or at least proper to fiction,—the truth being rather the reverse; for a principal use and justification of fiction, he contends, is to reduce and harmonise the seeming exaggerations of real life. "Facts are often extravagant and monstrous, because we do not know the whole system which explains and legitimatises them. But none have any business in fiction which are not intelligible parts of the artificial whole that they appear in."

When Brockden Brown published the first of his preternatural as well as sensational novels, "Wieland," he thus referred in his preface to the mystery whereby hangs the tale: "It is a sufficient vindication of the writer, if history furnishes one parallel fact." But his fellow-countryman, and one of the most judicious if not most vigorous of American critics,— the historian Prescott,—condemns "this vicious recurrence to extravagant and improbable

incident"—and maintains that truth cannot always be pleaded in vindication of the author of a fiction, any more than of a libel. As Boileau, in the wake of Horace, had ruled, long before:

> Jamais au spectateur n'offrez rien d'incroyable;
> Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable.

An acute critic has lately argued, with much force, that novelists and poets in highly wrought descriptions seldom paint life as it is, though human life is so multiform that no fictitious incident can be devised which has not some counterpart reality. But, as he contends, although they are careful to give every conception the colour of probability, and although they have a right to say that things as strange as those they invent have happened and do happen, their conceptions as a whole are a reflection, not of life, but of their own morbid and ill-regulated imagination. Moralists, urges this moralist, have a right to object to this unnecessary propagation of vicious or ugly thoughts. "It is bad enough to have sin and frivolity about one in the world, but the principles of literary toleration do not require us to stand by and see novelists and poets peopling the world of imagination, out of mere wantonness and caprice, with a multitude of pernicious ideas. Ugly things have, we may suppose, their own uses in nature. It is different in literature. The end of literature is to create what is beautiful and good, not what is hideous and revolting; and the man who begets murderesses and villains wholesale in a

three-volume novel is as completely a literary monster as the man who deliberately created a Frankenstein would be a social pest." Granting literature to be an art, what is true in the daily papers and Newgate Calendar may be something else in novel or romance.

ABOUT SLEEPING PARTNERSHIP IN CRIME.

CÆSAR, Antony, and Lepidus, all three of them, on board Pompey's galley. Why not get rid of the triumvirate at one stroke? Pompey never had such an opportunity, nor ever again will have. His trusty adherent Menas prompts him urgently to dispose of all three forthwith, and step into their shoes *ipso facto*. Wilt thou be lord of the world? Menas asks him. And to Pompey's dubious, How say'st thou? the other significantly replies with a renewed note of interrogation: Wilt thou be lord of the world? That's twice.—How should that be? inquires Pompey. And Menas bids him only entertain the notion, only signify assent to so grand a scheme, and he, Menas, poor as his master may think him, is the man who will give Pompey all the world.—Sextus Pompeius thereupon suggests that his magniloquent follower is simply drunk. But no such thing, Menas protests: "No, Pompey, I have kept me from the cup. Thou art, if thou dar'st be, the earthly Jove: whate'er the ocean pales, or sky inclips, Is thine, if thou wilt hav't." Show me which way, is his master's natural rejoinder. That way, Menas shows him at once. Nothing can be

easier. Just let Menas cut the cable, and when the vessel is off, all that is to be done is to cut the throats of the three visitors.

Pompey would have relished a consummation by him so devoutly to be wished for. But he lacks the audacity to fasten on such means for its accomplishment. He would have liked the thing done for him only too well; but he don't quite like—in fact he don't at all like—doing it himself. So he at once candidly confesses and peremptorily forbids.

> ——Ah! this thou should'st have done,
> And not have spoken on't! In me, 'tis villany;
> In thee it had been good service. . . . .
> . . . . Repent, that e'er thy tongue
> Hath so betray'd thine act: Being done unknown,
> I should have found it afterwards well done;
> But must condemn it now.

Like Macbeth, before he became a great criminal, Pompeius would not play false, and yet would wrongly win. Had but that blundering Menas undertaken the responsibility of the slaughter, and not broached the ugly subject until the business was disposed of, then had he been dear in his master's sight. Sextus would not have been overresentful at the crime, could it have been hurried over without his direct cognisance. But on no account could he become a registered partner in transactions of that sort. At most, he would have perhaps acquiesced in a kind of sleeping partnership. His must be strictly a very limited liability. He was ready enough for a large share of the profits;

but he would certainly not lend a hand in the business, and above all things his name must not appear as one of the firm.

Plutarch being the assumed source of Shakspeare's general knowledge of ancient history, it may be interesting to compare the bald narrative of the biographer with the animated adaptation of the dramatist. Plutarch simply records that "during the entertainment [of the three guests on board of Pompey's admiral-galley of six oars — the only patrimonial mansion that was left him, said their host], while the raillery ran briskly on Antony and Cleopatra, Menas came to Pompey, and told him secretly, that if he would permit him to cut the cable, he would not only make him master of Sicily and Sardinia, but of the whole Roman empire. Pompey, after a moment's deliberation, answered, that he should have done it without consulting him. 'We must now let it alone,' said he, 'for I cannot break my oath of treaty.'"

It suited both the conspirators against the life of the first Cæsar, and his friend and theirs, Cicero, not to take the latter into their counsels before the deed was done which laid the dictator low. On the evening of the day which saw great Julius slaughtered, Cicero, with other senators, visited the "Liberators" in the Capitol. "They had not communicated their plot to the veteran orator, through fear (they said) of his irresolute counsels; nor could his friends aver that it was from fear of his moral disapproval; for now that the deed was done, he

extolled it as a godlike act." Even Conyers Middleton cannot, however, entirely acquit Cicero of being, in some degree, accessary to the death of Cæsar; for it is evident, from some of his letters, that he had an expectation of such an attempt, and from what quarter it would come; and not only expected, but wished it. But Brutus, and Cassius, and the rest of them, believed it would never do to let Cicero know beforehand; and much obliged must Cicero have been to them for that same.

The remark, as Mr. Fonblanque has said, is as old as Cicero at least, that there is no difference between advising a crime, and approving it when committed. They who approve an action would willingly do it if the opportunity offered; that is, if some reason of self-love did not hinder them—"*quid enim interest inter suasorem facti et probatorem?*" But practically, men do make a great difference between the two, and shrink as persistently from explicitly advising, or straightforwardly participating in the deed, as they greedily appropriate the proceeds, when the deed has been done for them. There was a grim playfulness of affectionate solicitude for his lady-wife's comfort when, to her inquiry what deed of dreadful note Macbeth was about to do, his answer was that she had best not know till it was done.

> ——Ere, to the black Hecate's summons,
> The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
> Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
> A deed of dreadful note.

Lady Mach. What's to be done?
Mach. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed.

Could she have adopted that method of taking off Duncan, with her lord "innocent" of it till all was over, Macbeth would probably have preferred it beyond measure to the actual mode. Could he have been literally a sleeping partner in that night of horrors, he might have almost hoped to escape the Sleep no more! cry that froze his marrow—telling how Glamis had murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor should sleep no more, Macbeth should sleep no more.

The non-recognition of a conveniently zealous but unauthorized agency may be honest enough, as probably it was on Hadrian's part, in repudiating the execution of the conspirators against him, in A.D. 119. When Hadrian, as Dean Merivale records the incident, commenced his career at Rome with such ostentatious generosity, he was anxious to disarm the foes, disguised but not unknown, who clustered around him,—certain chiefs of the army or the senate, who all felt equally mortified by the elevation to which their former comrade had attained, and which they ascribed neither to his merits, nor his connexion with their old master, Trajan, but to a paltry intrigue (with the empress Plotina). By one account it was plotted to cut off the new emperor while hunting; by another, while sacrificing. "The assassination was to be effected during his absence from Italy; but it was in Italy that the re-

ported conspirators were seized, at four different spots; they were condemned and put to death by direction of the senate, and Hadrian, who had given the now customary promise never to exact the blood of a senator, could declare that their execution was without his orders, and against his wish."

To his record of the expulsion of the eunuchs from the Cæsar's palace, in the time of Gordian, by the minister Misitheus, Gibbon suggestively adds in a foot-note, respecting "that pernicious vermin of the east, who, since the days of Elagabalus, had infested the Roman palace," that from some hints in the rhetorical minister's letters, he "should suspect that the eunuchs were not expelled the palace without some degree of gentle violence; and that the young Gordian rather approved of, than consented to, their disgrace." So again as regards the accession of Claudius to the imperial throne, in A.D. 268. "At last, indeed, he received from the conspirators the bloody purple of Gallienus; but he had been absent from their camp and counsels; and, however he might applaud the deed, we may candidly presume that he was innocent of the knowledge of it."— Again, relating the exclusion of Christians from power in the days of Julian, thanks to the zeal of the provincial ministers of his authority, Gibbon remarks: "In the exercise of arbitrary power, they consulted the wishes rather than the commands of their sovereign; and ventured to exercise a secret and vexatious tyranny against the sectaries. . . . . The emperor, who dissembled, as long as possible,

his knowledge of the injustice that was exercised* in his name, expressed his real sense of the conduct of his officers, by gentle reproofs and substantial rewards."—Once again: recording Julian's letter to the prefect of Egypt, in abuse of that "abominable wretch" Athanasius, and desiring his expulsion, Gibbon's comment is: "The death of Athanasius was not *expressly* commanded; but the prefect of Egypt understood that it was safer for him to exceed, than to neglect, the orders of an irritated master."

That witty and warlike young Koreishite, Abdallah Ibn Saad, appears to have been a thorn in the flesh to Mahomet, whose confidence he betrayed, whose apostolic mission he questioned, and whom he held up to ridicule, instead of implicitly revering as the Prophet. When the young man's pardon was entreated of Mahomet, now established in authority, and potentially a dispenser of life and death, the Prophet "for some time maintained a stern silence; hoping, as he afterwards declared, some zealous disciple might strike off the offender's head." No one, however, stirred; so, yielding to the supplications of Othman, he granted a pardon. A pardon might much more readily have been granted to any zealous disciple who, without consulting the Prophet in words, but only consulting his looks, and his known

* In this reiterated use of the word "exercise" in so brief a space, Gibbon appears to have been unwontedly careless of his composition.

impatience of the derider, would have put the derider's life past praying for.

Gibbon pointedly writes of the assassination of emir Houssein, Timour's obnoxious colleague, that he "was slain by some sagacious friends, who presumed, for the last time, to disobey the commands of their lord." A sagacious friend, of this sort, is better than a zealous disciple, who, quick to obey a verbal behest, is slow to read looks, and to translate them into action.

M. Dumas exemplifies the sagacity of such a friend in D'Artagnan, the king's musketeer, whose eyes too often read the eyes of Louis XIV. not to become "perfectly acquainted with the expression of them;" so that he "perceived he must render the king a service without his commanding it,—almost in spite of himself." He renders that service, and is afterwards called to account by the king respecting it. How came he to venture on so bold a stroke? "Because you gave me the order, sire."—"I?"—"Yourself."—"Indeed, I did not say a word, monsieur."—"Sire, an order is given by a sign, by a gesture, by a glance, as intelligibly, as freely, and as clearly, as by word of mouth. A servant who has nothing but ears, is not half a good servant." Take the highly-wrought case of Miriam's fatal glance, as interpreted and obeyed by Donatello, in Mr. Hawthorne's striking Romance of Monte Beni. Donatello urges her to bid him drown the disturber of her peace. He needs but a word from her. But that word she will not give. On the contrary, she forbids violence, and

does so with tone and gesture such as she might have used in taming down the wrath of a faithful hound, that had taken upon himself to avenge some supposed affront to his mistress. But the day comes when, opportunity serving, or strongly tempting, she gives a look,—explicit enough and eager enough to be Donatello's warrant for the murder. The instant of its accomplishment, "What have you done?" is Miriam's horror-stricken whisper. And Donatello replies, "I did what your eyes bade me do, when I asked them with mine, as I held the wretch over the precipice."—With the dead thump upon the stones below, had come an unutterable horror. "And my eyes bade you do it!" repeated she. There had been but short time to weigh the matter; but the victim had had his trial in that breath or two, while Donatello held him over the cliff,—and his sentence in that one glance, when Miriam's eyes responded to Donatello's. An unsuspected witness had seen that glance; and in that look, which revealed all Miriam's heart, had seen an awful combination of hatred, triumph, vengeance, and, as it were, joy at some unhoped-for relief. When this shocked and saddened witness eventually tells all this to Miriam, "Ah! Donatello was right, then," murmurs the latter, quivering throughout all her frame. "My eyes bade him do it!" Their common friend, Kenyon the sculptor, is but a kindly sophist when he asserts, in the last page of the story, that after all, Miriam's crime lay in a glance: she did no murder. But, sanctioned by that glance, Donatello did it for her.

And, true to her character, she from that moment accepted the liabilities of active partnership in guilt.

Sir Walter Scott brings Cromwell to Woodstock intent on securing the person, and therefore, by implication, on taking the life, of the young man, Charles Stuart, a fugitive from the rout at Worcester. On the spot, Oliver hesitates; and Pearson, his trusty confidant, is made to say: "If this be the case, it is a pity your Excellency came hither. Corporal Humgudgeon and I, the greatest saint and greatest sinner in your army, had done the deed, and divided the guilt and the honour between us." Cromwell expresses himself indignant upon this occasion. But upon a subsequent one, when he tells Pearson that "the party" is pent up in a certain turret of the building, and the old soldier says, "There is a cask of gunpowder in this cabinet; were it not better, my lord, to mine the tower, if he will not render himself, and send the whole turret with its contents one hundred feet into the air?" "Ah, silly man," says Cromwell, striking him familiarly on the shoulder, "if thou hadst done this without telling me, it had been good service."

Corneille makes Ptolemy fawn on Cæsar after murdering Pompey for him, with the apologetic assurances, framed to appease the expressed resentment of great Julius, that

> J'ai donc considéré, qu'en ce péril extrême,
> Nous vous devions, seigneur, servir, malgré vous-même.
>
> * * * * *
>
> J'en ai souillé mes mains pour vous en préserver.
> *Vous pouvez en jouir, et le désapprouver.*

In the matter of Dudley's alleged complicity in the murder of his wife, Amy Robsart, Mr. Froude deems the conclusion inevitable, if her half-brother (John Appleyard) spoke the truth, that although Lord Robert was innocent of a direct participation in the crime, the unhappy lady was sacrificed to his ambition. "She was murdered by persons who hoped to profit by his elevation to the throne; and Dudley himself—aware that if the murder could be proved, public feeling would forbid his marriage with the Queen [Elizabeth]—used private means, notwithstanding his affectation of sincerity, to prevent the search from being pressed inconveniently far."

When Mary Stuart set sail for Scotland (*Adieu, belle France*), the English fleet was on her track, the same historian tells us, sent out nominally to suppress piracy, yet with dubious orders, like those with which Admiral Winter had before sailed for the Forth.* There was no command to arrest her, yet there was the thought that "she might be met withal;" and if the admiral had sent her ship with its freight to the bottom of the North Sea, "being done unknown," Elizabeth, and perhaps Catherine de Medici as well, "would have found it afterwards well done."

Again, in the case of Smith's attempt to poison Shan O'Neil, in 1563, the Earl of Sussex had pre-

* Winter, the Queen insisted, whatever he did, must do it of his own accord, pleading no directions from herself.—Cf. Froude, History of the Reign of Elizabeth, vol. i. p. 179 *et sq.*

viously revealed to Elizabeth in a fatal letter his own personal endeavours to procure O'Neil's murder; so that the Queen herself, Mr. Froude freely owns, cannot be wholly acquitted of responsibility, loud as was the indignation she professed at Smith's crime; for no hint transpires of any previous displeasure, when the proposal had been made openly to herself. "After the repeated acts of treachery which had at least been meditated towards Shan with Elizabeth's knowledge, she was scarcely justified in assuming a tone of such innocent anger." Serviceable Smith, however, took the entire guilt as his very own.

In September, 1565, the Earl of Bedford, weary of waiting for instructions which never came, wrote at last, says Mr. Froude, "half in earnest and half in irony to Elizabeth, to propose that she should play over again the part which she had played with Winter." That is to say, he would enter Scotland with the Berwick garrison, and "her Majesty could afterwards seem to blame him for attempting such things as with the help of others he could bring about." But in this instance the Queen—bold a Bess as she might be—was too much frightened to consent even to a vicarious fulfilment of her promises.

How did Mary Stuart herself, in 1566, receive the dark suggestion, in the Craigmillar Bond, for the destruction of Darnley? According to the same historian, she may be credited with having refused her consent to the proposals then made to her; and yet that such a conversation as that between Argyle,

Huntly, Maitland, and Bothwell, &c., should have passed in her presence was serious and significant. The Queen was perhaps sincere in her reluctance; but perhaps she "desired not to know what was intended till the deed was done." And here Mr. Froude quotes and applies our Shakspearean text—saying, This they should have done, and not have spoken on't. In her 'twas villany: in them it had been good service.

Pizarro seems, on Mr. Prescott's showing, to have long felt the removal of the Inca, Atahuallpa, to be essential to the success of his enterprise in Peru. But, foreseeing the odium that would be incurred by the death of his royal captive without sufficient grounds, while he laboured to establish these, he "still shrunk from the responsibility of the deed, and preferred to perpetrate it in obedience to the suggestions of others, rather than his own. Like many an unprincipled politician, he wished to reap the benefit of a bad act, and let others take the blame of it." It is the old story of the Jewish king's lament, as versified by one of our Queen Anne's men:

> In vain I would forget, in vain excuse
> Fraternal blood by my direction spilt;
> In vain on Joab's head transfer the guilt;
> The deed was acted by the subject's hand;
> The sword was pointed by the king's command;
> Mine was the murder, it was mine alone.

Pizarro's own turn came, when the whirligig of time brought round its revenges; and now historians

differ as to the complicity, implicit or explicit, of Almagro, in the assassination of his chief. The arrangements of the conspirators could hardly have been concealed from Almagro, since his own quarters were to be the place of rendezvous (June 26, 1541). Yet, says Mr. Prescott, there is no good evidence of his having taken part in the conspiracy,—notwithstanding Almagro's own letter about the "intolerable injuries" by which the governor so "galled" him and others, that there was no help for it but they must now take the remedy into their own hands. If Almagro's partnership was really a sleeping one, he had the best of it, in his ugly business, in more ways than one.

Mr. Tytler discovered in the State Paper Office a communication from Sir Ralph Sadler, and some other English statesmen (one of them a bishop—as a Scotch reviewer of Mr. Lyon's history of St. Andrews remarks with a note of admiration), to Henry VIII., intimating that one Wishart had come from the Laird of Brunston and others, commissioned to offer their services to send Cardinal Beatoun out of the world, provided his Majesty would pay handsomely for the riddance. "The sagacious Sadler remarked that it was an ugly business for a king to be concerned in; said, at the same time, there was no doubt he would feel deeply grateful to those who accomplished so meritorious though unpleasant an action; and recommended the conspirators to proceed on speculation. This they declined to do in the meantime; but it appears that they afterwards

changed their mind, and performed their job in a very deliberate manner." Some one among them would seem to have had the wit, and to have acted up to the spirit, of Arthur, Earl of Ingelwald, in one of Mr. Roscoe's unacted and almost unread tragedies, —where Arthur overrules the hesitation of Cornelius as to the intentions of Ethel, Earl of Felborg:

——are you so dull?
Why did he visit us now, but to say this?
Why did he give us into your charge, man,
On whom he might rely to guess his meaning,
And do it without questioning?
Corn. By my faith,
He gave no hint of this.
Arth. A hint, Cornelius!
What would you have? Will you go speak to him?
And drive him by plain questioning to deny it?

In Colonel Whyte Melville's legend of the Dangerfield Ghost—an episode in one of his lively fictions. —occurs this apostrophe in reference to a baffled suitor whose fair one, against her will, had promised her father to marry another, and who had not character enough to do anything out of her own notions of the beaten track: "Cousin Edward! Cousin Edward! you should have carried her off then and there; she would have been truly grateful for the rest of her life, but she would have died sooner than open her lips." Not Pompey would have been more pleased *à parte post:* why was Menas so over-circumspect *à parte ante?*

A strong-minded daughter, in one of Mrs. Gaskell's

novels—not, however, strong-minded in the technical, objectionable, stigmatised sense,—ventures on a deed of daring from which her father, a timid clergyman, would have shrunk, desirable as he knew the result would be. The venture once made, "Nay, Margaret," he says, "I'm glad it is done, though I durst not have done it myself." A less innocent pair of colleagues, in "Martin Chuzzlewit," may contribute a different kind of illustration of the same text. Jonas Chuzzlewit tries to bribe Slyme to let him out of the room for five minutes—one hundred pounds for only five minutes in the next room. "What to do?" asks Slyme. The face of his prisoner, as he advances to whisper a reply, makes Slyme recoil involuntarily; but he stops and listens to the whisper in his ear. The words are few, but his own face changes as he hears them. And Slyme answers under his breath, with trembling lips, "I wish you hadn't told me half as much. Less would have served your purpose. You might have kept it to yourself." If he must drag Slyme into a sort of partnership in so black a business, why did he not arrange it to be on sleeping terms?

Good stories perhaps a few, and bad ones to a high multiple, are or have been on record of or about President Lincoln. Not the worst of the former is one connected with the alleged remonstrances of General Sherman against the shyness of the government to declare a distinct policy, at the time of Sherman's carrying all before him in his last campaign. Would the government never distinctly explain to him what

policy it desired to have pursued? "I asked Mr. Lincoln explicitly whether he wanted me to capture Mr. Davis or let him escape. 'I'll tell you, General,' said Mr. Lincoln. 'Out in Sangamon county there was an old temperance lecturer who was very strict in the doctrine and practice of total abstinence. One day, after a long ride in the hot sun, he stopped at the house of a friend who proposed making him a [*sic*] lemonade. As the mild beverage was being mixed, the friend insinuatingly asked if he wouldn't like just the least drop of something stronger, to brace up his nerves after the exhausting heat and exercise. 'No,' replied the lecturer, 'I couldn't think of it; I'm opposed to it on principle. But,' he added, with a longing look at the black bottle that stood conveniently to hand, 'if you could manage to put in a drop unbeknownst to me, I guess it wouldn't hurt me much! Now, General,' Mr. Lincoln concluded, 'I'm bound to oppose the escape of Jeff. Davis; but if you could manage to let him slip unbeknownst-like, I guess it wouldn't hurt me much!'"*

The once popular author of "Wild Oats" tells us in his Memoirs that, when at Sligo, in 1765, he saw and talked with John O'Brien, who had served at the battle of the Boyne. "He was a fine old man, and told me many interesting and circumstantial

* The story is told by "Agate," the correspondent of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, who accompanied Chief Justice Chase in his Southern tour.

anecdotes relative to that day;—one, that a gunner told King James, that at that very precise moment his gun was so pointed, he could, at a twinkle, end the dispute for the three crowns; but James forbade him; and the nephew and son-in-law were thus saved." Menas and Pompey over again,—so far as Menas is concerned. And no doubt there are hot Orangemen who—devout believers in the warming-pan, and zealous toasters to the pious, glorious, and immortal memory,—will unhesitatingly assume that Pompey too was represented at the Boyne, and that the ousted monarch thought, if he did not say to the gunner,

> ——Ah, this thou should'st have done,
> And not have spoken on't.

ABOUT COMING TO BELIEVE ONE'S OWN LIE.

PROSPERO, duke of Milan, enamoured of study and the liberal arts, cast upon his brother, Antonio, the government of his realm. Antonio abused the trust. He new created the creatures that were Prospero's, "or changed them, or else new-formed them." And thus it came to pass that while the rightful—though hardly can he be called the reigning—duke was rapt in secret studies, the false Antonio, having both the key of officer and office, set all hearts in the state to what tune pleased his ear; so that now he was, as Prospero, fretting in exile, phrases it,

> The ivy which had hid my princely trunk,
> And suck'd my verdure out on't.

Prospero neglecting worldly ends, "all dedicate to closeness,"—his usurping brother found usurpation easy work, and got so used to the daily exercise of supreme power, that before very long he came to believe, virtually and in effect, to all practical intents and purposes, that he himself, Antonio, *was* the duke:

——like one
Who, having unto truth, by telling of it,
Made such a sinner of his memory,
To credit his own lie,—he did believe
He was the duke.

The construction of this sentence, as Mr. Grant White observes, is a little involved, and so the MS. corrector of Mr. Collier's folio of 1632 changes the words "unto truth" in the first line, to *to untruth.* But this, the American critic objects, will never do. "How can a man make a *sinner* of his memory to *un*truth by telling a *lie?* The correction achieves nothing but nonsense. The plain construction of the passage, as the original gives it, is, 'Who, having made such a sinner of his memory unto truth, to credit his own lie by telling of it,' which gives us a portrait of a kind of liar that is not uncommon."

A deceived heart, in the language of the Hebrew prophet, hath so turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

Manifold and variegated are the forms which self-credulous lying, or self-mystification, assumes,—from white lies to the biggest of black ones. Shaftesbury remarks, in his Letter concerning Enthusiasm, that men are wonderfully happy in a faculty of deceiving themselves, whenever they set heartily about it, and that a very small foundation of any passion will serve us, not only to act it well, but even to work ourselves into it beyond our own reach. Elsewhere his lordship owns himself so charitable, as to think

there is more of innocent delusion than voluntary imposture in the world; and that they who have most imposed on mankind, have first imposed upon themselves, and are so much the more successful, as they can act their part more naturally, and to the life. Nor needs there any abstruse depth of philosophy to see, and sing, that

> Fresh confidence the speculatist takes
> From every hair-brain'd proselyte he makes.
> And therefore prints:—himself but half deceived
> Till others have the soothing tale believed.

Vires acquirit eundo. Of his very eccentric and troublesome contemporary, the Earl of Buchan, Sir Walter Scott observes, on journalizing his death, that his imagination was so fertile, that he seemed really to believe the extraordinary fictions which he delighted in telling. It is a melancholy reflection that scarcely more than a year after entering this note in his Diary, Sir Walter himself became gradually subject—from the progress of disease—to a hallucination of a painful character, though to him at the time soothing and satisfactory. Towards the autumn of 1831 his friends could see that he was beginning to entertain the notion that his debts were paid off. By degrees, says his son-in-law and biographer, "dwelling on this fancy, he believed in it fully and implicitly"—and though a gross delusion, neither his publisher nor any one else had the heart to disturb it by any formal statement of figures.

Like good-natured, fussy little Lady Bellair, in Mr. Disraeli's love-story,—who, a systematic match-maker by benevolence or malice prepense, persuaded herself into a belief of her having brought together the two happy pairs who figure off in the tale in question, and whom she made a point of so constantly visiting on the strength of that assurance. "As her ladyship persists in asserting, *and perhaps now really believes*, that both matches were the result of her matrimonial craft, it would be the height of ingratitude if she ever could complain of the want of a hearty welcome."

One may apply to this subject what we are told of Elliston the actor, that when the *Coronation* was performed, in which he took the principal part, he, by dint of the nightly fiction, came at length to fancy himself the king, and would burst into tears, and hiccough a blessing on the people,—his people. And Mr. Thackeray assures us of George IV., that he had heard so much of the war, knighted so many people, and worn such a prodigious quantity of marshal's uniforms, cocked-hats, cock's feathers, scarlet and bullion in general, that he actually fancied he had been present in some campaigns, and, under the name of General Brock, led a tremendous charge of the German legion at Waterloo.

Mr. Sala, who pronounces the Marseillais to be the most barefaced and most entertaining liars he ever met with,—adding, however, that they lie, not from malice or uncharitableness, but from habit, from constitution, from a vivid imaginativeness, rather than

from a deliberate desire to deceive and defraud,—has a story to tell of them, in evidence that sometimes, as he thinks, they believe in their own lies. A Marseillais (thus runs the story), visiting some relations at an adjoining village, told them, as a mere Munchausenism and pastime, that a lion had escaped from a menagerie at Marseilles, and was rushing up and down La Cannébière,* biting and rending the affrighted inhabitants by scores. The villagers, "impelled by an irresistible curiosity, rushed into the city to see this devouring wild-beast who was decimating La Cannébière. The Marseillais was left alone. He began to scratch his bushy head, and at last faltered forth, *Mon Dieu! si c'était vrai, ciou que z'avais dit!*—'Suppose, after all, that what I told them was true!' And he, the arch-deceiver, made the best of his way back to Marseilles, to see if by chance a roaring lion was not careering up and down La Cannébière."

An acute writer has recently published an essay on the frequent fondness people show for attributing to a false step in life that want of success which is really due to their incapacity,—the reflection serving so conveniently to soothe their vanity and restore their self-esteem. We did wrong, it is true,—thus the essayist supposes them to commune with themselves;—but then, if luck had not been incorrigibly

* Of which the Marseillais sublimely say—with a positively superlative stretch of the comparative—that if Paris had a Cannébière, Paris would be a little Marseilles.

hostile, the error would have been speedily repaired, and all would have gone on well. "And after a certain time, a man gets into the way of looking back even upon the false step to which he pleads guilty as something for which he was not altogether responsible. Just as people go on telling an untrue story until they believe it to be true, they can in the same way go on ascribing all their ills to some one mistake, and to talk of it as they might be expected to talk of a blight that had descended upon them from the clouds." For it is surprising, as this writer shows, how the lapse of time assists us in the pleasant process of divesting ourselves, as it were, of our own conduct.

After relating how notably Perkin Warbeck acquitted himself, in the capacity of Pretender to the throne, insomuch that great folks as well as the vulgar generally believed that he was indeed Duke Richard, Lord Bacon adds: "Nay, himself, with long and continual counterfeiting, and with oft telling a lie, was turned by habit almost into the thing he seemed to be, and from a liar to a believer."

Lord Brougham's political portrait of Mr. Dundas (Lord Melville) includes this feature—that, as a skilful debater, he was capable of producing a great effect in the House by his broad and coarse appeals to popular prejudices, and his confident statement of facts—those statements which, Sir Francis Burdett once happily observed, "men fall into through an inveterate habit of official assertion." Now Swift published elaborate Proposals for printing a very

curious Discourse, entitled *ΨΕΥΔΟΛΟΓΙΑ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ*; or, the Art of Political Lying,—apparently a joint affair of his and Dr. Arbuthnot's; in one chapter of which ironical treatise, the author "warns the heads of parties against believing their own lies, which has proved of pernicious consequences of late; both a wise party, and a wise nation, having regulated their affairs upon lies of their own invention." To whom might be applied Churchill's lines:

> Poets, accustomed by their trade to feign,
> Oft substitute creations of the brain
> For real substance, and, themselves deceived,
> Would have the fiction by mankind believed.
> Such is your case.

Or one might equally apply the same satirical rogue of a poet's description of a certain hero of his, who

> ——personated Valour's style
> So long, spectators to beguile,
> That, passing strange, and wondrous true,
> Himself at last believed it too.

Sir Matthew Hale warns his children, on the article of Lying, that as it is a great sin against Heaven, and a great offence against humanity, so is it also "an injury to the speaker; for, besides the disgrace which it brings upon him, it occasions so much baseness of mind, that he can scarcely tell truth, or avoid lying, even when he has no colour of necessity for it; and, in time, he comes to such a pass, that as other people cannot believe he speaks

truth, so he himself scarcely knows when he tells a falsehood." A state of mind epigrammatically depicted by Coleridge, in one of his newspaper *jeux-d'esprit:*

> Charles, grave or merry, at no lie would stick,
> And taught, at length, his mem'ry the same trick.
> Believing thus what he so oft repeats,
> He's brought the things to such a pass, poor youth,
> That now himself, and no one else, he cheats,
> Save when unluckily he tells the truth.

There is a generation of men, moralises good Owen Feltham, with whom it is a custom to clack out anything their heedless fancy springs; who are so habituated to falsehood, that they can out-lie an almanack, or, what is more, a Chancery bill; who "will lie so often, that at last they are not conscious that they lie at all,"—creating figments of their own, and coming to regard them as facts.

For by repeating often—says John Locke, in one of his miscellaneous papers—with vehemence of imagination the ideas that pertain to a subject, these at length come to take so deep an impression, that they all pass for clear truths or realities, though perhaps the greater part of them have at several times been supplied only by the fancy, and are nothing but the pure effects of the imagination.

As Sir James Stephen remarks, in his account of the career of John of Leyden, the rapidity with which the contagion of such stupid extravagances was propagated, and the apparent genuineness of the belief which a man of much fortitude and some

acuteness at length yielded to the coinage of his own brain, are still curious, though not unfrequent phenomena in the science of mental nosology.

Mr. Hawthorne's consular experiences at Liverpool include his dealings with an old man, professedly a stray American, who had been wandering about England for seven-and-twenty years, and all the while doing his utmost to get home again. So at least he soberly affirmed. But possibly he was an impostor, Mr. Hawthorne surmises, "one of the multitudinous shapes of English vagabondism; and told his falsehood with such powerful simplicity, because, by many repetitions, he had convinced himself of its truth."

The story of the miser, who, from long accustoming to cheat others, came at last to cheat himself, and with great delight and triumph picked his own pocket of a guinea to convey to his hoard, is considered "not impossible or improbable," by Fielding; who goes on to say, that in like manner it fares with the practisers of deceit, who, from having long deceived their acquaintance, gain at last a power of deceiving themselves, and acquire that very opinion (however false) of their own abilities, excellences, and virtues, into which they have for years perhaps endeavoured to betray their neighbours.

Of that celebrated Nun of Kent, whose cell at Canterbury, for some three years, was "the Delphic shrine of the Catholic oracle, from which the orders of Heaven were communicated even to the Pope himself," Mr. Froude tells us, not only that by the

Papal party she was universally believed to be inspired,—Wolsey believing it, the bishops believing it, Queen Catherine believing it, and Sir Thomas More's philosophy being no protection to him against the same delusion,—but that finally, she herself believed the world, when she found the world believed in her.*

Shrewd and suggestive are some remarks by the late Mr. Caldwell Roscoe, in his review of latter-day ghost-seeing, and ghost-stories;—as where he says, that nothing makes even an unbeliever so sore as to throw doubts on his own ghost-story; and that the surest way to bring it out in strong relief is to suggest explanations, which are always met by appropriate facts; so that the crevices by which doubt may creep in are gradually filled up, and the narrator very soon conscientiously believes his narrative in its amended form. He comes to believe in his own—ghost. The process may be said to resemble that attributed by Richard to Matthew, in Prior's metaphysical poem:

> And, pleased to find your system mended
> Beyond what you at first intended,
> The happy whimsey you pursue,
> Till you at length believe it true.
> Caught by your own delusive art,
> You fancy first, and then assert.

* "Her story is a psychological curiosity. . . . She was probably deep in lying before she actually knew it. Fanaticism and deceit are strangely near relations to each other, and the deceiver is often the person first deceived, and the last who is aware of the imposture."—*Froude, History of England*, vol. i. pp. 295, 301.

It has been remarked of Lady Morgan, as an autobiographer, that, Irish in all things, she was pre-eminently Irish in her facts, for which she depended very little on her memory. Not that, retaining one impression of a scene or incident, she deliberately stated or wrote down another; but that, retaining none, or an imperfect one, she stated or wrote down what was best calculated for immediate effect, most pleasing to her public, or most flattering to herself. We are told that she once wrote to Lady Charleville from some town in Warwickshire, to say that she had settled down to finish one of her books in a charming country, in a pretty apartment opening on a conservatory, with a velvet lawn before her door; —and that Lady Charleville, returning shortly afterwards from London to Dublin, stopped at the place, hunted up the address, and found "Glorvina" in a small lodging in the suburb looking on a cabbage-garden. "Paradoxical as it may seem, there was as much self-deception as vanity in this. She had fancied herself into the heroine of one of her own romances, with the accessories, and wrote accordingly. The real and the fictitious were so blended in her, that it gradually surpassed her power to separate them."

La Bruyère says that the man who tries to be thought younger than he really is, comes to believe himself of the age he gives out. And again, that the *roturier* who is in the habit of referring his origin to some ancient baron, from whom, with persistent mendacity, he claims direct descent, has the

happiness of working himself up to a belief in the truth of this pedigree.

Mr. Thackeray's Andrea Fitch, in that unfinished story which, after an interval of long years, merged its sequel in the Adventures of Philip Firmin,—"never spoke the truth; and was so entirely affected and absurd, as to be quite honest at last;" for it is the author's avowed belief that this fantastic youth—to whom the world was like the [then] Coburg [now Victoria] Theatre, and he in a magnificent costume acting a principal part—did not know truth from falsehood any longer, and was, when he was alone, when he was in company, nay, when he was unconscious and sound asleep snoring in bed, one complete lump of affectation. Andrea used to show to his friends, in strictest confidence, a ringlet, which he declared to be the hair of a dear girl in Spain, whom he loved to madness. The precious token had been clipped by him from the wig of a lovely lay-figure, with cast-iron joints and a cardboard head, which had stood for sometime in his atelier. Nor does it seem that he felt any shame about the assertion, or was eventually conscious of mendacious misrepresentation—for, with his imaginative temperament he "had grown to believe that the hair did actually come from a girl in Spain," and loved to have it so, with all his heart.

There is a down-easter, from the State of Maine, in one of Mr. Justice Haliburton's books, who being told of a performer in Cushing's Circus Company who climbs up a pole, and stands on his head on the

top of it, replies that he don't doubt it, for he has done "more nor that" himself. What more? he is asked. "Why [says he], stranger, I don't suppose you'll believe it; but I'll tell you what I did. When I was standin' on my head on the top of that are pole, I jist raised myself up a little with my arms, opened my jaws, put my teeth to it, and pulled it right up out of the ground, and then jumped down, with one end of it in my mouth." "Well," says the other, "I don't believe it, and that's flat." "I shouldn't wonder [is the reply], if you didn't. But I have told it so often, I believe it myself—I actually do."

One of Washington Irving's earliest essays introduces us to an old gentleman addicted to unconscionably long stories,—among which there is one venerable joke, originally borrowed from Joe Miller, but which, "by dint of long occupancy and frequent repetition," he "now firmly believes to have happened to himself somewhere in New England."

Memorable after his sort is Mr. Perch the messenger, of the house of Dombey and Son, who was made a more important man than ever by the bankruptcy—being besieged with questions about the firm and its fate. To meet which questions he would forge inventions wholesale, to his own glorification; informing questioners, for instance, how he had once said, to the sublime head of the firm himself, "Might I make so bold as ask, sir, are you unhappy in your mind?" (before the crash came;) and how Mr. Dombey had replied, "My faithful Perch . . . . but no,

it cannot be!"—and with that had struck his hand upon his forehead, and said, "Leave me, Perch!" Then, in short, would Mr. Perch, a victim to his position, tell all manner of lies; affecting himself to tears by those that were of a moving nature, and really believing that the inventions of yesterday had, on repetition, a sort of truth about them to-day.

In a later work by the same author we have a parallel passage of character. Mr. Stryver—that very tiresome barrister, who is always "shouldering" his way where he is not wanted,—having been rejected by Miss Manette, and married a florid middle-aged widow instead, was in the habit of declaiming to the latter, over his full-bodied wine, on the arts Miss Manette (now Mrs. Darnay) had once put in practice to "catch" him, and on the diamond-cut-diamond arts in himself, madam, which had rendered him "not to be caught." Some of his King's Bench familiars, it is added, who were occasionally parties to the full-bodied wine and the lie, excused him for the latter by saying that he had told it so often, that he believed it himself—"which is surely such an incorrigible aggravation of an originally bad offence, as to justify any such offender's being carried off to some suitably retired spot, and there hanged out of the way."

In connexion with this display of extra-forensic rhetoric, by which a barrister is charitably supposed to talk over himself, may be mentioned Perch's counsel in Mr. Trollope's case of Pike *v.* Perch. Pike's junior counsel admits in confidence to a friend

that he thinks Perch ought to have succeeded; and adds: "Sir Ricketty Giggs led for us, and I know he thought so too at first; though he got so carried away by his own eloquence at last that I believe he changed his mind." We shall meet with another example of this kind of bar-belief, from the same author, by-and-by.

Bowed Davie, the original of Scott's Black Dwarf, used to spend his evenings at the back of the Woodhouse kitchen fire, and there make the rustics gape and stare at the many ghost, fairy, and robber stories which he had either heard of or invented, and poured out with unceasing volubility, and so often that he believed them all true.

Old Hundred, the lazy nigger coachman in Mrs. Stowe's tale of the Dismal Swamp, is so profuse and emphatic in his excuses to his young mistress for not taking out the horses, that his wife, Aunt Rose, can't refrain from a slap at her old man for telling the lady about his being up with Pete all night,* "when de Lord knows you laid here snoring fit to tar de roof off. . . . I rally believe that you've told dem dar lies till you begin to believe dem yourself," said Rose.

Mr. Anthony Trollope's Miss Gushing, of Greshamsbury, who strives so hard, and all in vain, to make a conquest of Mr. Oriel, the high-church vicar,

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* "Ah, Miss Nina, dat an't all. Pete was desperate sick last night. Why, Miss Nina, he was dat sick I had to be up with him all night."—Dred, ch. vi.

—and who subsides into the wife of a Methodist preacher at last,—is in the habit of saying, after the grapes are sour, that had she only chosen to exert herself like a certain other young lady, she could have had Mr. Oriel easily, oh, too easily; but she had despised such work, she said. And Miss Gushing "stated it as a fact so often that it is probable she was induced to believe it herself."

A later work of this very popular author supplies incidentally another sort of illustration. It is where the great barrister, Mr. Furnival's, zeal in behalf of his client, Lady Mason, more than half suspected by him of forgery, is described and analysed. "Twenty years ago, at the time of the trial, he had at one time thought,—it hardly matters to tell what, but those thoughts had not been favourable to her cause. Then his mind had altered, and he had learned—as lawyers do learn—to believe in his own case." A separate essay, or volume, might be written on these phases of professional psychology.* A previous illustration of it, also by Mr. Trollope, has already been cited.

Sir Archibald Alison moralises *more suo* upon

* Before the *second* trial comes on, Mr. Furnival has become entirely persuaded of his fair client's guilt. But he waxes enthusiastic again in his speech for the defence. For Mr. Trollope opines that when a man knows he can speak with ease and energy, and that he is sure of eager listeners, it is all but impossible that he should fail to be enthusiastic, even though his cause be a bad one. So at any rate it was with Lady Mason's counsel. "All his old fire came back upon him,

Napoleon's entire disregard of truth, and the "unblushing, or perhaps it should be said *unconscious* effrontery with which he continued the most mendacious statements, after their falsehood had been demonstrated, not merely to others, but to himself."

In illustration of the extent to which the Emperor carried this "extraordinary peculiarity," we are referred to the statement of his private secretary and panegyrist Meneval, that having once for all formed an idea to himself, often totally unfounded, of the strength of the various corps and divisions of his army, he would issue his orders, and determine his expectations of them, as if they were of that strength, without the slightest regard to the returns of the commanders, which showed they were not of half the amount. *Ex hypothesi* was with him *de facto*. His "unconquerable adherence to error," in the face of the clearest evidence, as seen in his writings whenever it suited his purpose, Sir A. Alison can only account for by suggesting, that Napoleon's "wishes were, literally* speaking, the father to his thoughts, and that what he desired he really believed to be true." In other words, that having invented a bouncing lie, he stuck to it

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and before he had done he had almost brought himself again to believe Lady Mason to be that victim of persecution as which he did not hesitate to represent her to the jury."—Orley Farm, vol. ii. ch. xxxii.

* [But why, and how, *literally* speaking?]

through thick and thin, and even came to believe in it himself.

In one of his strenuous onsets against the home policy of our government during the outbreak of the French Revolution, Coleridge, himself at that time a party pamphleteer, declares the panic of property to have been struck in the first instance for party purposes, and goes on to say that "when it became general, its propagators caught it themselves, and ended in believing their own lie; even as the bulls of Borodaile are said sometimes to run mad with the echo of their own bellowing."

Again, in one of those manuscript notes and marginalia with which S. T. C. enriched his copy, greatly prized, of Southey's "Life of Wesley," the Moravian leader's advice to the Methodist leader, when asked what could he preach, namely, "Preach faith *till* you have it; and then, *because* you have it, you *will* preach faith,"—is saddled by our annotator with the query: "Is not this *too* like, Tell a lie long enough and often enough, and you will be sure to end in believing it?"

How much old men (at least of the Shallow sort) are given to lying, is a Shakespearean commonplace. Centenarians of the Parr and Jenkins figure have recently been subjected, by the sceptical, to the general charge of more or less mild white, or sub-conscious mendacity. It might be supposed, observes one of Sir G. C. Lewis's critical school, that an educated man should know his own age, were it not that the process by which a fiction gradually

imposes upon its author is only too familiar to every one who likes to tell a story. To believe your own lies is the first step in the art of lying gracefully.*

That acute metaphysician and always careful writer, Mr. Samuel Bailey, in his able investigation of the causes of belief being regarded as voluntary, refers to the habit people have of taking up opinions as a sort of party badge—which "opinions," having no dependence on the understanding, may be assumed and discarded at pleasure; but which, by partisans thus taking them up, are often maintained with more violence than such as are founded on the most thorough conviction. By thus defending opinions of which they have no clear conviction, people often succeed, says Mr. Bailey, in imposing on themselves as well as others. "Paradoxical as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that they are not always aware of the exact state of their own minds; they frequently imagine themselves to believe more than they are actually convinced of. On many

* "A certain respectable Dissenting minister used to draw crowded houses by announcing that he would preach at the age of more than one hundred. He corroborated his statement by a lively account of a battle in which he had won distinction in his youth. When the old gentleman died, aged one hundred and seven, in the odour of sanctity, it appeared, by examining a register, that the battle had been fought before his birth. The evidence for such cases cannot be sufficiently weighed till a proper allowance has been deducted for enormous lying. When an old man's brain is growing gradually bewildered, it would be hard to grudge him the harmless gratification of spinning incredible yarns."—Essay on Longevity, *Sat. Rev.*, xix. 44.

questions they are not able to form any definite decision, and yet, from the necessity of professing some opinion, or joining some party, and from the habit of making assertions, and even arguing in favour of what they are thus pledged to support, they come to regard themselves as entertaining positive sentiments on points about which they are really in doubt." Notwithstanding this reserved point, practically they come to believe their own lie —that of taking up with what they are verily convinced of; and may, without much injustice, be referred to the category of Inveracities described by the metaphysical poet (Queen Anne's style):

> As folks, quoth Richard, prone to leasing,
> Say things at first because they're pleasing,
> Then prove what they have once asserted,
> Nor care to have their lie deserted,
> Till their own dreams at length deceive them,
> And, oft repeating, they believe them.

AT THE TOWER WINDOW WITH SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

THE introductory discourse with which M. Guizot, some fifty years since, ushered in his first course of lectures on Modern History, opened with the familiar but always instructive story of a "statesman equally celebrated for his character and misfortunes, Sir Walter Raleigh," who, while confined in the Tower, employed himself in finishing the second part of that History of the World of which he had already published the first. A quarrel arose in one of the courts of the prison (so the story runs); he looked on attentively at the contest, which did not pass off without bloodshedding,—and when he retired from the window, Sir Walter's imagination was strongly impressed by the scene that had passed under his eyes. Next day a friend came to visit him, and related what had occurred. But great was his surprise when this friend, who had been present at, and even engaged in the occurrence of the preceding day, proved to him that this event, in its results as well as in its particulars, was precisely the contrary of what he had believed he saw. Other accounts

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bring in a variety of independent eye-witnesses, each with a version discrepant from and irreconcilable with the rest. At any rate, the sequel of the affair was, that Raleigh, when left alone, took up his manuscript and threw it in the fire; convinced that as he had been so completely deceived with respect to the details of an incident he had actually witnessed, he could know nothing whatever of those he had just described with his pen.

Are we better informed or more fortunate than Sir Walter Raleigh? is M. Guizot's inferential query. And his judgment is, that the most confident historian would hesitate to answer this question directly in the affirmative. For history relates a long series of events, and depicts a vast number of characters; and yet how great the difficulty of thoroughly understanding a single character or a solitary event! It is from an infinity of details, where everything is obscure, and nothing isolated, that history is composed, and man, proud of what he knows, because he forgets to think of how much he is ignorant, believes that he has acquired a full knowledge of history when he has read what some few have told him, who had no better means of understanding the times in which they lived, than we possess of justly estimating our own.

On that memorable Opera night, in 1814, when the Prince Regent and the Allied Sovereigns appeared together in state at His Majesty's Theatre—the Princess of Wales being there also—a certain Dowager Countess, of party-giving popularity in

the great world, had invited a throng of favoured guests to meet Field-Marshal Blucher at her house when the opera should be over. Among the guests was Mrs. Opie, who, being an early arrival, heard from one new comer after another, as they came dropping in from the Opera House, before the entertainments there had closed, contradictory versions of "what was deemed surprising intelligence"—namely, that the Princess of Wales being seated opposite to the Royal box, the Prince had bowed to her—so one set of eye-witnesses affirmed; whereas it was maintained by another set, equally confident in a very natural reliance on ocular demonstration—on their own particular, personal, ocular experience of only an hour ago—that the Prince had bowed, not to the Princess, but to the pit. Her ladyship the hostess, with a view to resolve this vexed question, made a point of asking every new comer, the moment he or she entered the room, "Did the Prince bow to the Princess, or to the pit?" And there were as many who declared that he bowed to the pit, as that he bowed to the Princess: whereupon a discussion of unusual interest was set a-going in that distinguished assembly, as to the philosophic value of testimony, oral, ocular, and traditional.

The circumstance itself was of slight moment, even Mrs. Opie can allow; but she claims some importance for it from the consideration that although not of consequence enough to be mentioned in the pages of History, it would certainly be referred to in those of Biography, and in the memoirs of the

day; and among so many conflicting testimonies, how, she asks, was the biographer to know which was the accurate account? "One of the company suggested that he must take that side of the question on which the greatest number of persons agreed; another, that he must write by the evidence of those whom he thought most worthy of credit. However, in one point, every one was of the same opinion, namely, that the writers of History and Biography were much to be pitied; and that poor Sir Walter Raleigh made a wise resolve in determining to burn the history he was writing, when, of a circumstance which he saw happen under the window of his prison in the Tower, he heard the next day several different and even contradictory accounts, and not *one* of them the true one."

In his sceptical disquisitions on the Study of History, Lord Bolingbroke illustrates his position, in one signal instance, by the discrepancies observable in two leading Grecian historians, in their narrative memoirs of Cyrus the Great. "Herodotus flourished, I think, little more than half a century, and Xenophon little more than a whole century, after the death of Cyrus; and yet how various and repugnant are the relations made by these two historians, of the birth, life, and death of this prince! If most histories had come down from these ages to ours, the uncertainty and inutility of them all would be but the more manifest. We should find that Acusilaus rejected the traditions of Hesiod, that Hellanicus contradicted Acusilaus, that Ephorus

accused Hellanicus, that Timæus accused Ephorus and all posterior writers Timæus."

Another noble lord, of the same school as accomplished St. John—if not in politics, at least in politeness, and pyrrhonism—avows his disposition to extend his pyrrhonism, not unfrequently either, to historical facts themselves, at least to most of the circumstances with which they are related; "and every day's experience confirms me," he assures his son, "in this historical incredulity. Do we ever hear the same fact related exactly the same way, by the several people who were at the same time eye-witnesses of it? No; one mistakes, another misrepresents; and others warp it a little to their own turn of mind or private views. A man who has been concerned in a transaction will not write it fairly; and a man who has not, cannot." Four or five years later, his lordship impresses anew on his son's receptive faculties the same cautionary counsel, in a more practical form: "I would have you see everything with your own eyes, and hear everything with your own ears; for I know, by very long experience, that it is very unsafe to trust to other people's. Vanity and interest cause many misrepresentations; and folly causes many more. Few people have parts enough to relate exactly and judiciously; and those who have, for some reason or other, never fail to sink or to add some circumstances."

The words with which Frederick the Great opens his History are, "La plupart des histoires que nous

avons sont des compilations de mensonges mêlés de quelques vérités." Archdeacon Hare, without standing up for the strict justice of this censure, yet quotes it in arguing against the shallow commonplace that "history is all true, and poetry is all false,"—quotes it as from an historian of his opponent's own school, an assertor and exposer of the profligacy of mankind. "This much too is most certain, that circumstantial accuracy with regard to facts is a very ticklish matter; as will be acknowledged by every one who has tried to investigate an occurrence even of yesterday, and in his own neighbourhood, when interests and passions have been pulling opposite ways." In which sense too might he say, as Raleigh says in a different sense, that "if we follow Truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out our eyes."

Applicable to this view of the question is Prescott's remark, after enforcing the difficulty of arriving at historical truth amidst the conflict of testimony,—and the little reliance to be placed on those writers who pronounce on the mysterious past with what Fontenelle calls "a frightful degree of certainty," a spirit the most opposite to that of the true philosophy of history,—that it must be admitted, however, that the chronicler who records the events of an earlier age has some obvious advantages in the store of manuscript materials at his command—the statements of friends, rivals, and enemies furnishing a wholesome counterpoise to each other; and also, in the general course of events as they actually

occurred, affording the best commentary on the true motives of the parties. The actor, he remarks, engaged in the heat of the strife, finds his view bounded by the circle around him, and his vision blinded by the smoke and dust of the conflict; while the spectator, whose eye ranges over the ground from a more distant and elevated point, though the individual objects may lose somewhat of their vividness, takes in at a glance all the operations of the field. "Paradoxical as it may appear, truth founded on contemporary testimony would seem, after all, as likely to be attained by the writers of a later day as by contemporaries themselves."

Incidentally, in another of his works, Prescott cautions those of his readers who may not themselves have had occasion to pursue historical inquiries, as to the difficulty *they* must have of imagining on what loose grounds the greater part of his narrative is to be built. With the exception of a few leading outlines, he says, there is such a mass of inconsistency and contradiction in the details, "even of contemporaries," that it seems almost as hopeless to seize the true aspect of any particular age as it would be to "transfer to the canvas a faithful likeness of an individual from a description simply of his prominent features." And again, in another chapter, which describes the celebrated tournament near Trani, in September, 1502, the historian observes, in a foot-note, pertinently prosaic in contrast with the chivalric romance of the text, that this famous tourney, its causes, and all the details of the action,

are told in as many different ways as there are narrators; and this, notwithstanding it was fought in the presence of a crowd of witnesses, who had nothing to do but look on, and note what passed before their eyes. The only facts in which all agree, are, there was a tournament, and that neither party gained the advantage. So much for history!

Something it is that in something all should agree —near as that minute *aliquid* may be to a mere negative *nescio quid*. Thereby the foundations of history are laid, such as, and shadowy as, they are. There is a sort of substratum obtainable, after all, out of this medley of internecine narratives, and thereupon the jaded, eyesore, brainsick historian is fain to set up his rest. It is like the practical conclusion come to by the Venetian Senate, in Shakspeare, when a conflict of statistics bewilders their calculations.

Duke. There is no composition in these news
That gives them credit.
1 *Sen.* Indeed, they are disproportion'd:
My letters say, a hundred and seven galleys.
Duke. And mine, a hundred and forty.
2 *Sen.* And mine, two hundred;
But though they jump not on a just account
As in these cases, where the aim reports,
'Tis oft with difference, yet do they all confirm
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

To some such practical deduction, after eliminations wholesale, must the most sceptical of historical critics come, if such a thing as history is to remain *in*

esse, or *in posse* even, *in rerum naturâ*. Even Raleigh knew to the last that there had been a scene, of some sort, under his window—though the details of it, like the terms of an equation, had been made to cancel each other, right and left,—and x alone remained, a still unknown quantity.

La Bruyère puts the standing difficulty in his best lively way. "Une chose arrive aujourd'hui, et presque sous nos yeux; cent personnes qui l'ont vue la racontent en cent façons différentes; celui-ci, s'il est écouté, la dira encore d'une manière qui n'a pas été dite. Quelle créance donc pourrais-je donner à des faits qui sont anciens et éloignés de nous par plusieurs siècles? Quel fondement dois-je faire sur les plus graves historiens? Que devient l'histoire?"

The inevitable oversights and mistakes of history are a common-place with even the most common-place thinkers. All that we know is, nothing can be known, is the despairing ultimatum of many a disgusted inquirer.

> Thou know'st, of things perform'd so long agone,
> This latter age hears little troth or none,

Tasso reminds his Muse, when buckling himself to the toil of historicising in immortal verse the Recovery of Jerusalem by Godfrey and his peers. "By coach to my Lord Crewe's," writes Mr. Pepys one day, in his well-kept *diurnal*: "Here I find they are in doubt where the Duke of Buckingham is; which makes me mightily reflect on the uncertainty of all history, when, in a business of this moment,

and of this day's growth, we cannot tell the truth." Mr. Barham rhymes and reasons *con amore* on the pros and cons of this vexed question at large:

I've heard, I confess, with no little surprise,
English history call'd a farrago of lies;
And a certain Divine,
A connexion of mine,
Who ought to know better, as some folks opine,
Is apt to declare,
Leaning back in his chair,
With a sort of a smirking, self-satisfied air,
That "all that's recorded in Hume and elsewhere,
Of our early *Annalës*
A trumpery tale is,
Like the Bold Captain Smith's, and the Luckless Miss Bailey's—
That old Roger Hovedon, and Ralph de Diceto,
And others (whose names should I try to repeat o-
ver, well I'm assured you would put in your veto),
Though all holy friars,
Were very great liars.
And raised stories faster than Grissell and Peto:
* * * * *
That, in short, all the 'facts' in the *Decem Scriptores*,
Are nothing at all but sheer humbugging stories."

The common remark as to the "utility of reading history" being one day made in Johnson's presence, the sage remarked: "We must consider how very little history there is; I mean, real authentic history. That certain kings reigned, and certain battles were fought, we can depend upon as true; but all the colouring, all the philosophy of history, is conjecture." Mr. Arthur Pendennis fancies, for his part, that the speeches attributed in his veracious Chroni-

cles of a Most Respectable Family, to Clive Newcome, the Colonel, and the rest, are as authentic as the orations in Sallust or Livy. "You tell the tales as you can, and state the facts as you think they must have been. In this manner, Mr. James, Titus Livius, Professor Alison, Robinson Crusoe, and all historians proceeded. Blunders there must be in the best of these narratives, and more asserted than they can possibly know or vouch for."

Don't read history to me, for that *can't* be true, Sir Robert Walpole is reported to have said, when asked to choose the book he would like to listen to. His son Horace appears to have inherited the paternal pyrrhonism in an almost aggravated form. His letters abound with pungent proofs of this. "We know past times very imperfectly," he writes, in one place, "and how should we, when few know even the present, and they who do, have good reason for not being communicative? I have lived till I think I know nothing at all." Again, three or four years later: "Whether like the history of darker ages, falsehood will become history, and then distant periods conjecture that we have transmitted very blundering relations. . . . . [I know not;] but when I know so little of what has passed before my own eyes,"—he is referring to the riots of 1780,—"I shall not guess how posterity will form their opinions." Again: "The multiplicity of lies coined every day only perplexes, not instructs. When I send you falsehoods, at least I think or believe them probable at the time, and correct myself afterwards, when I

perceive I have been misled. I, who am now in no secrets, trust to facts alone, as far as they come to light. Mercy on future historians, whose duty it will be to sift the ashes of all the tales with which the narratives of the present war have been crammed. Some will remain inexplicable." To another and reverend correspondent he writes: "I have long said, that if a paragraph in a newspaper contains a word of truth, it is sure to be accompanied with two or three blunders; yet, who will believe that papers published in the face of the whole town should be nothing but magazines of lies, every one of which fifty persons could contradict and disprove? Yet so it certainly is, and future history will probably be ten times falser than all preceding." Three years later he is telling Mann of the Westminster riots (1785) at Fox's election, &c., and of a squabble between his neighbour the new Marquis of Buckingham, and two young rioters of rank, of which quite contradictory stories are told: "In short, in such a season of party violence, one cannot learn the truth of what happens in the next street: future historians, however, will know it exactly, and what is more, people will believe them!" Four years afterwards he is entertaining Lady Ossory with the rumoured items of the Princess Amelia's Will, and the newspaper assumptions and comments thereupon,—whence this reflection, in the old strain and to the old tune, ensues: "History, I believe, seldom contains much truth; but should our daily lying chronicles exist and be consulted, the annals of these

days will deserve as little credit as the 'Arabian Nights.'" To the same Countess, after an interval of five summers, he again expresses his scepticism as to the "study of history" being "useful"—"which I doubt, considering how little real truth it communicates, and how much falsehood it teaches us to believe." And once more, for a last example, writing on the chaotic politics of 1794: "I leave to history to collect the mass together, and digest it as well as it can; and then I should believe it, as I do most ancient histories, composed by men who did not live at the time, and guessed as well as they could at the truth and motives of what had happened, or who, like Voltaire and David Hume, formed a story that would suit their opinions, and raise their characters as ingenious writers."

If from those of our fellow-men whom we daily meet, as Mr. Froude has observed, we are divided inwardly by impalpable and mysterious barriers,—how much more difficult to understand a bygone age, the actors being so different from ourselves in motives and habits and feelings. The past he therefore calls a perplexity to the present; "it lies behind us as an enigma, easy only to the vain and unthinking, and only half solved after the most earnest efforts of intellectual sympathy, alike in those who read and those who write."

So much for the unravelling of motives. And not so very much better for the elucidation of facts. The dates of historical narratives, remarks a critical authority,—especially of modern histories—are a

heap of confusion: no one can tell where they lie, or where they do not lie; what is in them, or what is not in them. If literature is called the "fragment of fragments," so is history "a vestige of vestiges;" so few facts leave any trace of themselves, any witness of their occurrence; while of fewer still is that witness preserved; "a slight track is all anything leaves, and the confusion of life, the tumult of change, sweep even that away in a moment. It is not possible that these data can be very fertile in certainties. Few people would make anything out of them: a memoir is here, a manuscript there—two letters in a magazine—an assertion by a person whose veracity is denied,—these are the sort of evidence out of which a flowing narrative is to be educed."

The trial of an action for libel brought by Lord Cardigan against Major Calthorpe, in respect of the magnificent but not warlike Charge at Balaclava, was made the occasion of the following among other comments: "Here is a brilliant feat of arms performed before the eyes of a whole army. Hundreds who took part in it and thousands who watched it with intense anxiety are still living. It has been described again and again in despatches, in journals, in letters, in books, and in conversation; and yet it is with the utmost difficulty that we get at the truth of its most remarkable features. The smoke, the din, the excitement, and the confusion of battle left such impressions on the minds of the actors that we can hardly get from them a consistent

story of just those particulars on which an historian would dwell so gliby and dogmatically. With such an example before our eyes, if we do not share Sir Robert Walpole's scepticism about history in general, we may well receive the minute details of battles and sieges with some little reservation of judgment."

Mr. Carlyle follows up his reflections on the imperfectness of that same experience, by which philosophy is to teach, by others on the incompleteness of our understanding of those occurrences which do stand recorded, which, at their origin seemed worthy of record, and the summary of which constitutes what we now call History. "Is it even possible to represent them as they were? The old story of Sir Walter Raleigh's looking from his prison-window, on some street-tumult, which afterwards three witnesses reported in three different ways, himself differing from them all, is still a true lesson for us. Consider how it is that historical documents and records originate; even honest records, where the reporters were unbiassed by personal regard; a case which, were nothing more wanted, must ever be among the rarest. The real leading features of a historical Transaction, those movements that essentially characterise it, and alone deserve to be recorded, are nowise the foremost to be noted. At first, among the various witnesses, who are also parties interested, there is only vague wonder, and fear, or hope, and the noise of Rumour's thousand tongues; till, after a season, the conflict of testi-

monies has subsided into some general issue. . . . . Suppose, however, that the majority of votes was all wrong; that the real cardinal points lay far deeper; and had been passed over unnoticed, because no Seer, but only mere Onlookers, chanced to be there!"

Is it not both pertinent and piquant to note that every modern writer who alludes to Sir Walter's Tower story, utterly differs in details from every other?

Deserving of more attention, if not careful study, than it seems ever yet to have secured, is a certain drawing-room game, in which the players sit in a row, A. at the one end whispering a story into the ear of B., who repeats it in a whisper to C., and C. to D., and so on to Z., as the *terminus ad quem*: Z. then has to repeat aloud the story as he got it, and the "fun" of the game lies in the enormity of development and perversion the story has undergone. It would be instructive to try the effect on an evening party of eminent historians, and to trace the process of oral tradition in their instance; to watch the stages of a story as started, say, by Mr. Grote, and from him repeated by Earl Stanhope to Mr. Carlyle, who conveys it to Dean Merivale, who confides it to Professor Brewer, by whom it is transferred through Mr. Massey to Mr. Lecky, who hands it on through Mr. Freeman to Mr. Froude. To account for the ultimate transformation by detecting where a fault lay in the line of communication, as they do with deep sea electric cables, would be highly suggestive and edifying if the thing were done well and done thoroughly.

ABOUT HAVING THE LAW ON ONE'S SIDE.

A Cue from Shakspeare.

SAMPSON and Gregory, armed retainers of Capule are intent on provoking to a quarrel Abram and Balthazar, armed retainers of Montague. But, eager as they are for the fray, they would like to have the law on their side, and therefore contrive how to make the others strike the first blow. In the streets of Verona, when and where Montagues and Capulets meet, a very petty gesticulation will suffice to beget knocks. So Gregory will frown, and Sampson will bite his thumb at the others as they pass; and as soon as that spark has fired the train—always laid, always ready—then let him and Gregory at once go in and win: and for all sakes let Gregory remember his swashing blow.

Greg. Draw thy tool; here come two of the house of Montague. . . .

Samp. Let us take the law of our sides: let them begin.

Greg. I will frown, as I pass by; and let them take it as they list.

Samp. Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them; which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it.

Enter ABRAM *and* BALTHAZAR.

Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?
Samp. I do bite my thumb, sir.
Abr. Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?
Samp. [to Gregory]. Is the law on our side, if I say Ay?

As Gregory answers No to this, and as Sampson is scrupulous to keep on the safe side of the law, and studious to put his antagonists in the wrong, he professes in reply to Abram and Balthazar not to bite his thumb at them, only he insists on the fact of biting his thumb for all that. Of course a fight is speedily got up on other pretences; but Sampson and Gregory exult in so manœuvring as to keep the law on their side.

The common folk of Verona, as Shakspeare pictures them, seem to have been particular on this score in those troublous times. We hear Peter, when upbraided by the Nurse, for not taking her part like a man when Mercutio derides her, declare that his weapon should have been out in a trice, had there been occasion for it: "I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side."

Bolingbroke and his uncle York affect a punctilious scrupulosity as to the law, when they take measures against the king. "What would you have me do?" exclaims the former:

——I am a subject,
And challenge law: attorneys are denied me;
And therefore personally I lay my claim, &c.

And hesitating York is talked over by his ambitious nephew to acquiesce in his procedure:

> It may be, I will go with you;—but yet I'll pause;
> For I am loath to break our country's laws.

Another banished man, an antique Roman, with less of Bolingbroke's plausibility of manner, affected more of submission to the law, under similar circumstances. When Cinna and Marius were invited by the senate to enter Rome, Cinna—who had received the message with courtesy—made his way into the city with a strong guard; while Marius—whose manner of acknowledging the invitation, with gloomy aspect and menacing looks, betokened, says Plutarch, "that he would soon fill the city with blood,"—stopped at the gates, with a dissimulation dictated by his resentment. He said, he was a banished man, and the laws prohibited his return. If his country wanted his service, she must repeal the law which drove him into exile. "As if," is Plutarch's comment, "he had a real regard for the laws," or were entering a city still in possession of its liberty.

Of Pisistratus it has been remarked, that, raised above the law, that subtle genius governed only by the law; and even affected to consider its authority greater than his own. The history of Rome is rife in pretensions to this effect. Reformers, innovators, revolutionists, all more or less claimed to have the law on their side. The year of Cæsar's Ædileship—which was that of the appearance of Catiline—was

marked by proceedings on the popular Ædile's part, at the boldness of which the Marian party, all those opposed to Sylla and the Senate, took heart, as Dean Liddell says, and recognised their chief; while the Senate on their part took up the matter, and gave audience to Catulus accusing Cæsar of openly assaulting the Constitution. "But nothing was done, or could be done, to check his movements. In all things he kept cautiously within the Law." This for the time being; but it would hardly do for his opponents to rely upon his always adhering with equal scrupulosity to the legal side. When Pompey procured a Decree of the Senate by which he calculated on keeping his own army on foot after Cæsar should be required to disband his,—it is strange, the historian remarks, that Pompey should not have foreseen that a man of Cæsar's character, so resolute and so ambitious, "would break through the cobwebs of law with the strong hand." Ben Jonson, in one of his Roman tragedies, makes Cato and one of the Catilinarian conspirators interchange sharp sentences on the province of law:

Cato. Impudent head!
Stick it* into his throat; were I the consul,
I'd make thee eat the mischief thou has vented.
Gab. Is there a law for't, Cato?
Cato. Dost thou ask
After a law, that would'st have broke all laws
Of nature, manhood, conscience, and religion?

* Meaning the paper that implicates Gabinius Cimber, who refuses to incriminate himself by owning to any knowledge of it.

Gab. Yes, I may ask for't.
Cato. No, pernicious Cimber,
The inquiring after good does not belong
Unto a wicked person.
Gab. Ay, but Cato
Does nothing but by law.

Michelet introduces Pope Innocent III., in his contest with imperial power, with the words: "A great legist, and accustomed on all questions to consult the law, he sat down to his own self-examination, and rose fully satisfied that the law was with him." Innocent was himself a Roman, and in some respects, and they respect-worthy ones, no degenerate type of the antique sort. As regards their distinctive reverence for law, we English are apt to plume ourselves on best representing the Romans, though, of course beating them hollow. What we know of the doings of North Britons, during the Porteous riots, is characteristic of both sides of the Tweed. Men seem, it has been remarked, to have been habitually under an impression in those days that the law was at once an imperfect and a partial power: they seem to have felt themselves constantly liable to be called upon to supplement its energy, or control or compensate its errors.

Discussing the real nature, as he apprehends it, of Spanish civilisation—and arguing that a blind spirit of reverence, in the form of an unworthy and ignominious submission to the Crown and the Church, is the capital and essential vice of the Spanish people, —Mr. Buckle observes that, in the most civilised

countries, the tendency always is to obey even unjust laws, but, while obeying them, to insist on their repeal. This, he says, is because we perceive that it is better to remove grievances than to resist them: while we submit to the particular hardship, we assail the system from which the hardship flows. England stands forth pre-eminent in the tactics which have thus ensured her having the law on her side. The sturdy Briton, as the poet depicts him, is

> Patient of constitutional control,
> He bears it with meek manliness of soul;
> But if authority grow wanton, woe
> To him that treads upon his free-born toe!
> One step beyond the boundary of the laws
> Fires him at once in Freedom's glorious cause.

"L'Anglais," said Chamfort, "respecte la loi et repousse ou méprise l'autorité. Le Français, au contraire, respecte l'autorité et méprise la loi. Il faut lui enseigner à faire le contraire." So of our transatlantic kin, M. de Tocqueville wrote that what he chiefly admired was "the extraordinary respect entertained for law: standing alone, and unsupported by an armed force, it commands irresistibly. I believe, in fact, that the principal reason is, that they make it themselves and are able to repeal it. We see thieves who have violated all public laws obey those that they have made for themselves. I think that there is a similar feeling among nations." Our cousins-German are perhaps betwixt and between us and the French in regard for the law as such. Mrs. Trench, during her stay in Vienna, was struck with

the implicit submission there paid, sixty or seventy years since, to any and every prohibitory injunction of a paternal despotism. "*C'est défendu* acts in this country with the force the most violent penal laws do not possess in England. At the play a lady said to me, '*On ne siffle plus au spectacle; c'est défendu.*'" Everywhere and on every side, observed an English reviewer on the struggle between Austria's Emperor and Hungary's Diet in 1861, *the law* was put forward as the unfailing support of Hungary, and the uncompromising foe to military despotism; and as M. Deak said in the eloquent address which closed the session, it is impossible to over-rate the strength which the firm persuasion that it has the law on its side, and is abiding only by its legal rights, gives to a nation in the hour of trial and adversity. "Vague revolutionary aspirations may excite a nation, but they differ according to the colouring of each individual mind. The law is an external standard, by adhering to which men comfort and sustain their consciences, and which assures each man that his neighbour thinks and feels as he does."

John Bull, as portrayed in "The Heads of the People"—which is said to have suggested *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*—is declared, if the truth must be told, to like a bit of petty larceny as well as anybody in the world; but to like it with this difference—the iniquity must be made legal. "Only solemnise a wrong by an act of parliament, and John Bull will stickle lustily for the abuse; will trade upon it, will turn the market penny with it,

cocker it, fondle it, love it, say pretty words to it; yea, hug it to his bosom, and cry out 'rape and robbery' if sought to be deprived of it." This may serve to remind us of what Mr. J. S. Mill observes, in his chapter on the Ordinary Functions of Government,—that the law everywhere ostensibly favours at least pecuniary honesty and the faith of contracts; but that if it affords facilities for evading those obligations, by trick and chicanery—if there are ways and means by which persons may attain the ends of roguery, under the apparent sanction of the law—to that extent the law is demoralising. "And such cases are, unfortunately, frequent in the English system." *Id facere laus est quod decet, non quod licet,* as Seneca has it; or as another Latin poet of the decadence paraphrases that monition,

> Nec tibi quod liceat, sed quid fecisse decebit
> Occurrat.

It was a favourite saying of a great English lawyer, *Perimus licitis;* things legalised are the ruin of us. That is to say, the most fatal of vices are those of which the law takes no direct cognisance.

To recur, however, to the subject of English respect for law, as a national characteristic. Mr. Walker, the "Original," in his narrative essay on a Prize Fight, expatiates with almost enthusiasm on the scene at which he "assisted"—himself a London police-magistrate—when the ring was entered by two magistrates, attended only by a couple of constables, and a conference ensued with the managers

of the "mill," during which there was entire peace, though a manifestation of great anxiety. The conference ended, we are told, in the magistrates and their officers retiring; and the manager then gave a signal for dispersion, which was at once obeyed. Whatever disgrace, our essayist goes on to say, boxing-matches in the prize-ring may be thought to reflect on our national character, he hailed in this movement a proud testimonial the other way, as being a stronger instance than he could have conceived, of prompt obedience to the laws, and of respect to authority; "and I do not believe," he adds, "the like would have been exhibited in any other country in the world." For, as he shows in detail, there was every motive to excite resistance: all had paid, and rather dearly, for admission into the field; they had had the trouble of finding themselves situations, for which some had paid a further sum; there was great force on one side, and comparatively none on the other; there were some men who might think themselves almost above control on such occasions, and others at all times most ready to throw it off; the illegality of such assemblages was by no means universally admitted; their object had many defenders, and interference at that critical moment—it was just "when everything was arranged, and the combatants were preparing"—had somewhat the appearance of being vexatious. "Yet, notwithstanding this combination of reasons, the motley multitude departed as passively as if before an overwhelming force, and, indeed, more so; for

there was even no expression of disapprobation." If the worthy magistrate who describes and moralises on the scene attributes this "curious result" partly to the "great personal respectability and singular propriety of behaviour of the chief manager," he also partly ascribes it to "that inborn habit of obedience to authority, which is one of the most beneficial and admirable effects of our free institutions."

Leigh Hunt, in his autobiography, has a story of an encounter he and his brothers had, while boating up the Thames, with some fishermen, whose line across the river they cut their way through, on the refusal of the men to lower it. A quarrel ensued, and the two parties came to blows—before a full interchange of which, however, "beautiful evidence was furnished of the magical effect of the word 'law.' . . . I had gathered from some words which fell from them [the fishermen] in their rage, that what they had been about with their fishing-net was in all probability illegal. I assumed it to be so. I mentioned the dreaded word 'law;' my black coat corroborated its impression: and to our equal relief and surprise, we found them on the sudden converting their rage and extortion into an assumption that we meant to settle with their master, and quietly permitting us to go back to our friends." The author of "The Gentle Life" quotes Montesquieu's affirmation, that "if a man in England had as many enemies as he had hairs on his head, no harm could happen to him;" adding nor can it, if he keep on

the right side of the law, as many rascals know. But if you touch his rights, John Bull will cry out and fight to the death. "He has a great respect for the law; when hurt or insulted he turns to his law-gods and consults them; and yet law is a network of fictions, and his lawyers are no better than they should be: but John grumbles, and bears the inconvenience; he hates innovations, and thinks that changes do not work well. 'Marry, is that the law? Ay, that it is; crowner's quest law!' say the clowns in *Hamlet*, and the questioner is satisfied." Coleridge narrates with earnest eloquence the story of a mutiny in Sir Alexander Ball's ship, in the course of which he says: "An invisible power it was that quelled them; a power which was therefore irresistible, because it took away the will of resisting. It was the awful power of law, acting on natures preconfigured to its influences."

At the time of the discontents caused in the ranks by the fusion of the Indian army with our own, it was justly contended by thoughtful observers, in opposition to those who pronounced the disaffection a mutiny, that the men in this case had not only a grievance, but a real legal grievance—a peculiarity which at once distinguished their case from that of the sailors who mutinied at the Nore. For in this case the question that presented itself to the men was, whether they were soldiers at all. We are assured that those who knew these troops best were confident that they might have been put on quarter-rations, and drilled to exhaustion, without a thought

of resistance crossing their brain: "but they were overcome by the persuasion that they had the law on their side. It always is so with Englishmen; and we don't believe for an instant that any amount of discipline, though it involve an infinity of stiff cravats and an eternity of position-drill, will ever make a born Englishman amenable to his superior when he takes his stand on a point of law."

Mr. de Quincey, in his critical essay on Modern Greece, having to treat of the nuisance of dogs in that country, and their combined assaults on inoffensive travellers, refers to his own experiences in the Lake districts, the many fierce contests in which he had been compelled to engage, when passing perhaps some farm-house lying aside from the road—into which, the high-road, the "murderous savages," however, would sometimes pursue him. But the result in that case was that he uniformly recovered a sense of his rights. "Come," he would then and there—*i.e.* on the high road—say to himself, "this is too much; here at least is the king's highway, and things are come to a pretty pass indeed, if I, who partake of a common nature with the king, and write good Latin, whereas all the world know what sort of Latin is found among dogs, may not have as good a right to standing-room as a low-bred quadruped with a tail like you." And he professes to remember no instance which ever so powerfully illustrated the courage given by the consciousness of right. So long as he felt that he was trespassing on

the grounds of a stranger—off the road—he certainly "sneaked," and seeks not to deny it. But once landed on the high-road, where he knew his sure title to be as good as the dog's, not all the world, he protests, should have persuaded him to budge one foot.

When Punch, in his Letters to his Son, counsels him to enjoy life by every strictly legal means in his power, he cautions him, "In all your pleasures, however, respect the laws of your country. Remember that an act of parliament is like a rock; it matters not how nearly you approach, so you do not bump against it." Cortez knew what was in human nature when he devised a legal fiction to justify a certain illegal act: the device, indeed, as Mr. Prescott says of it, was too palpable to impose on any but those who chose to be blinded; but most of the army were of this number, and to them it seemed to give additional confidence, "in the same manner as a strip of painted canvas, when substituted, as it has sometimes been, for a real parapet of stone, has been found not merely to impose on the enemy, but to give a sort of artificial courage to the defenders concealed behind it." To have even the colour of having the law on one's side is such a comfort even to the lawless. Archdeacon Coxe, the historian of the House of Austria, after describing the act of the Bohemian malcontents in throwing Slavata and Fabricius from the council-chamber window (A.D. 1619), says that the part of their

letter of apology to the Emperor deserves to be cited, which justifies the outrage by its "conformity with an ancient custom prevalent throughout all Bohemia." In the like spirit do the insurgents in Scott's novel discuss the "lawful mode of following a fray across the Border." "Hout," exclaims one of these discordant counsellors, "just put a lighted peat on the end of a spear, or hayfork, or sic-like, and blaw a horn, and cry the gathering-word, and then it's lawful to follow gear into England, and recover it by the strong hand, or to take gear frae some other Englishman, providing ye lift nae mair than's been lifted frae you. That's the auld Border law, made at Dundrennan, in the days o' the Black Douglas." On that wild night at Bourne, described in Mr. Charles Kingsley's so-called (and critics say miscalled) "Last of the English," Hereward the Outlaw harangues his tumultuous followers with appeals to law: "For the law we fight, if we do fight; and by the law we must work, fight or not. Where is the lawman of the town?" "I was lawman last night, to see such law done as there is left," says one; "but you are our lawman now. Do as you will. We will obey you." "You shall be our lawman," shouted many voices.—"I! Who am I? Out-of-law, and wolf's head." "We will put you back into your law,—we will give you your lands in full husting." When the Clockmaker of Slickville hears of a Yankee being on trial for theft, he repudiates the fellow's claim to *be* a Yankee, —a race which "manages beautiful" in a sleight-of-

hand, a loan, a failin', a spekilatin', swap, thimble-rig, or somehow or other in the rigular way within the law; but as for stealin'—never—I don't believe he's a Yankee . . . We are too enlightened for that, by a long chalk. We have a great respect for the laws, squire; we've been bred to that, and always uphold the dignity of the law." And Mr. Slick has an interview with, and severely upbraids, the culprit in question: "You hadn't ought to have stolen that watch. That was wrong, very wrong indeed. You might have traded with the man, and got it for half nothin'; or bought it and failed, as some of our importin' merchants sew up the soft-horned British; or swapped it and forgot to give the exchange; or bought it and give your note, and cut stick before the note became due. There's a thousand ways of doing it honestly and legally, without resortin', as foreigners do, to stealin'." Much more to Sam Slick's mind is such a make of man as the Hon. Lucifer Wolfe, who avows for bimself, "I am no great hand at making laws; but one thing I *do* pride myself on: I never seed the law yet that could tie my hands, for I am a regular scroudger: I can slip them through any clauses you please. Build up four square walls of laws round me, and I'll whip thro' the keyhole." The Vicar, in Mr. Savage's novel of the Coming Man, dislikes evading the law, when the deputation discuss his son's property-qualification; but one of them suggests that a successful evasion of the law can never be a wrong proceeding, for it could only succeed by being

beyond impeachment; and if unimpeachable by law, it is permissible by law, and therefore legal in the strictest sense of the word. Our grandfathers, it has been admiringly observed, descried in the phrase of "a man who squares his conscience by the law," a common paraphrase or synonyme of a wretch without any conscience at all.

If it was the privilege of an emperor, Sigismund, to be *super grammaticam*, well may all sorts of stronger-minded and strong-willed authorities have claimed, and enforced their claim, to be *super leges*. Whether the law be on their side is to them a question beside the mark. They hold and assert themselves above the law; and, after that, it matters little which side of them it may happen to be, or they of it. The weaker goes to the wall; and in all such cases, by hypothesis, the law is the weaker. Alexander typified the class, when he chose to consult the oracle at Delphi on a prohibited day, upon which the law allowed no man to question the prophetess. She, with the law on her side, refused compliance with his summons, and alleged the law in her excuse. Whereupon Alexander rose straightway, and drew her by force into the temple; a proceeding which wrung from her, as if conquered by his irresistible prowess, the exclamation, "My son, thou art invincible!" an utterance at which Alexander caught, saying he wanted no other answer, for that was the very oracle he desired. But in after days he seems to have required a lesson on the subject of a sovereign's relation to law, when he lay

on the earth bemoaning himself for the murder of Clitus, and was rebuked to his heart's content by Anaxarchus the Abderite, who professed amazement at seeing the world's conqueror thus prostrate, "like a slave, in fear of the law and the tongues of men, to whom he should himself be a law, and the measure of right and wrong." Why else, demanded the sophist, was Jupiter represented with Themis and Justice by his side—and therefore the law on his side—but to show that whatever is done by supreme power is right?

So when Metellus the tribune opposed Cæsar's taking money out of the public treasury, and alleged some laws against it, the answer he got was, "Arms and laws do not flourish together;" and as the keys were not forthcoming, Cæsar had in a body of smiths to force the treasury then and there.

The same with Cæsar's rival. Comparing Pompey with Agesilaus, Plutarch stigmatises the former as one who thought himself exempted from observing the laws he had made, and that his transgressing them was, in fact, an eligible evidence of superior power.—When the Mamertines refused to appear before his tribunal, and to acknowledge his jurisdiction, declaring themselves to stand excused by an ancient privilege granted them by the Romans, superb was the contempt of Pompey's answer: "Will you never have done citing laws and privileges to men who wear swords?" The *rationale* of all such ruling powers is pretty much that of Suffolk in the play:

'Faith I have been a truant in the law;
And never yet could frame my will to it;
And, therefore, frame the law unto my will.

We are told of that very amusing Scotch judge Lord Hermand, that whereas Bacon advises judges to draw their law "out of your books, or out of your brains," *he* generally did neither; he being very apt to say, "My Laards, I *feel* my law—*here*, my Laards," striking his heart. Hence, according to Lord Cockburn, he sometimes made little ceremony in disdaining the authority of an act of parliament, when he and it happened to differ. He once got rid of one which Lord Meadowbank (the first), whom he did not particularly like, was for enforcing because the legislature had made it law, by saying, in his snorting, contemptuous way, and with an emphasis on every syllable—"But then we're told that there's a statute against all this. A statute! What's a statute? Words. Mere words! And am *I* to be tied down by words? No, my Laards; I go by the law of right reason."* A milder ornament of the bench, the Lord President Forbes, was snubbed without ceremony by the Duke of Cumberland, when making bold, in his gentle way, to remonstrate with H.R.H. on the barbarities committed by his troops after Culloden: to the gracious Duncan's representation that the Duke's soldiers were breaking the laws of the land, that royal commander roughly replied,

* "Lord Holland noticed this in the House of Peers as a strange speech for a judge."—Memorials of his Time, by Henry Cockburn, p. 137.

"The laws, my lord! By ——, I'll make a brigade give laws!"

If honest Hector McIntyre, the choleric young Scotch captain, in Scott's "Antiquary," typifies the contemners of law when he confronts the bailiff who would make a seizure of Miss Wardour's carriage and horses, so on the other hand is that legal officer a type of those to whom, *ex officio*, law is the most magnificent and supreme of abstract powers. Producing his silver-tipped bâton, the man of office warns Captain McIntyre against interference: "Sir, I have no quarrel with you,—but if you interrupt me in my duty, I will break the wand of peace, and declare myself deforced." And who cares — in stronger phrase exclaims Hector—whether the officer declares himself "divorced" or married? "As to breaking your wand, or breaking the peace, or whatever you call it, all I know is, that I will break your bones if you prevent the lad from harnessing the horses to obey his mistress's orders." "I take all who stand here to witness," cries the messenger, "that I showed him my blazon and explained my character"—and down he sits to write out an execution of deforcement, to the utter unconcern of "honest Hector," who is better accustomed to the artillery of the field than to that of the law. M. Michelet cannot refrain, in one portion of his History, from expressing his admiration of the intrepidity of the men who undertook the office of *huissier* in the middle ages—of men who, unarmed, in their black jacket, not enjoying, like the herald, the

protection of the tabard and arms of their master, would present the haughtiest prince in the world, an Armagnac, a Retz, in his frowning keep, with the slip of parchment which dashed castled towers to pieces. The *tariff* will not explain, he thinks, their daring devotion: "We must take into account, if I mistake not, the fanaticism with which the law inspires its followers," rightly to understand the heroism of *huissiers*.

IMPERFECT CRIMINALS.

Quam propè ad crimen sine crimine? How nearly may a man approach to guilt, without being guilty? was a favourite topic or vexed question when Casuistry flourished.

One of Mr. Hawthorne's Twice-told Tales is concerned with "a venerable gentleman, one Mr. Smith," whose silver hair is the bright symbol of a life unstained, except by such spots as are inseparable from human nature,—whose solitude is one night broken, allegorically, by the entrance of Fancy with a show-box, wherein he is made to see himself committing sins which may have been meditated by him, but were never embodied in act. Not a shadow of proof, it seems, could have been adduced, in any earthly court, that he was guilty of the slightest of those sins which were thus made to stare him in the face. "And could such beings of clouded fantasy, so near akin to nothingness, give valid evidence against him at the day of judgment?" Such is the query propounded, such the problem discussed, such the grave question vexed, in the *fantasiestück* entitled: FANCY'S SHOW-BOX: A MORALITY.

For to meditative souls in general, and to curiously speculative Mr. Hawthorne in particular, it is, as he says at starting, a point of vast interest, whether the soul may contract guilty stains, in all their depth and flagrancy, from deeds which may have been plotted and resolved upon, but which have never come into outward and actual existence. Must the fleshly hand, and visible frame of man, set its seal to the evil designs of the soul, in order to give them their entire validity against the sinner? It is not until the crime is accomplished that guilt clenches its gripe upon the guilty heart, and claims it for his own. Then, and not before, our author argues, "sin is actually felt and acknowledged, and, if unaccompanied by repentance, grows a thousand-fold more virulent by its self-consciousness.

"Be it considered, also, that men over-estimate their capacity for evil. At a distance, while its attendant circumstances do not press upon their notice, and its results are dimly seen, they can bear to contemplate it. They may take the steps which lead to crime, impelled by the same sort of moral action as in working out a mathematical problem, yet be powerless with compunction, at the final moment. They knew not what deed it was that they deemed themselves resolved to do. In truth, there is no such thing in man's nature as a settled and full resolve, either for good or for evil, except at the very moment of execution."

Mr. Hawthorne would hope, therefore, in conclusion, that all the dreadful consequences of sin

will not be incurred, unless the act have set its seal upon the thought.

There is another story in the same volume which tells how two villains were just about, for plunder's sake, to stab to the heart a traveller sleeping by the wayside, when interrupted by approaching footsteps. Hereupon each ruffian quietly takes a dram on the spot, and together they depart, *ré infectâ*, "with so many jests and such laughter at their unaccomplished wickedness, that they might be said to have gone on their way rejoicing." In a few hours, it is added, they had forgotten the whole affair, nor once imagined that the recording angel had written down the crime of murder against their souls, in letters as durable as eternity. (But does this square with the writer's previous conclusion ?)

The recording angel's book-keeping is altogether divergent from that of clerks of sessions and criminal courts. It is not theft, as lawyers advise us, to determine to steal a purse, nor to follow the man who carries it for the purpose of stealing it, nor to stretch out the hand for the purpose of taking it, nor even to lay hold of it with the same intention. The definition is not satisfied—we quote an essayist on the Morality of Advocacy—"till the purse is actually removed from its place; but as soon as that is done, the crime is complete, whatever may have been the temptation, however rapidly the repentance, and even confession and restitution, may follow. The servant who sees a halfpenny lying about, takes it into her hand with the intention of

stealing, and immediately changes her mind and puts it back, is a thief. A professional criminal, who has planned a robbery for weeks together, who has gone out with the full intention of committing it, and who runs away at the last moment because he sees a policeman coming, has committed no crime at all." This injustice, if so it must be called, at any rate this ethical anomaly, is inevitable here below. But they manage these things differently in another place.

Le mal qui ne se fait pas, observes M. Desiré Nisard, "n'est su que de celui qui seul connait le nombre des bons et des méchants et qui pèse les sociétés et les siècles."

> For tho' in law, to murder be to kill,
> In equity the murder's in the will.

The ancients frequently touched on this subject of a guilty will. It is the *animus,* and not the act, that constitutes the crime, says Juvenal:

> ——Scelus intrà se tacitum qui cogitat ullum
> Facti crimen habet.

Seneca teaches that he who is about to commit an injury, has committed it already: *injuriam qui facturus est jàm fecit.* So Keats, in an admired passage, speaks of the "two brothers and their *murdered* man," meaning the man they were taking away with them for the purpose of murdering him.

Benvenuto Cellini relates, in his autobiography, how he had formed a resolution, in case he should meet with that malicious fellow, Bandinello, one of

the blackest (painted) of Ben's many black beasts, "to fall upon him, and punish his insolence" without quarter. One evening, just as Cellini arrived at the square of St. Domenico, in Florence, Bandinello entered it on the other side—as Ben knew to be Ban's nightly wont. Whereupon, writes Ben, "I came up to him with a full resolution to do a bloody piece of work on the spot. I looked up, and saw him upon a little mule, which appeared no bigger than an ass, and he had with him a boy about ten years of age. As soon as he perceived me, he turned as pale as death, and trembled all over; I, who knew what a cowardly wretch he was, cried out to him, 'Fear nothing, vile poltroon! I do not think you worth striking.' He gave me a look of the most abject pusillanimity, and returned no answer.

"I thereupon resumed just and virtuous sentiments, and returned thanks to the Almighty for preventing me from perpetrating the rash action I intended. Being in this manner delivered from the diabolical frenzy by which I had been agitated, I recovered my spirits," &c.

Ben (italicè) it was for Ben that he stopped just in time, and that Ban became not his ban—in the shape of a life-long remorse (if at least Ben was capable of that sort of feeling).

> —Oh yet,
> Thank Heaven that you have not quite barter'd regret
> For remorse, nor the sad self-redemptions of grief
> For a self-retribution beyond all relief!

Possibly the author of these lines was not unmindful, as he wrote them, of a near relation's picture of "nobler bliss still" than the sudden relief of pain—the rapture of the conscience, namely, at the sudden release from a guilty thought. We refer to Harley L'Estrange, when "the sense of the danger his soul had escaped—the full knowledge of the guilt which the fiend had tempted—came dread before his clearing vision." He had meditated foul wrong towards his oldest friend. And thus already had he been apostrophised on the eve of its meditated accomplishment: "But woe, woe to thee, Harley L'Estrange, if to-morrow at this hour thou stand at the hearthstone, thy designs accomplished. . . . Wilt thou ever wash from thy memory the stain?"

So again Adam Smith moralises on the case of a man who, having resolved, and perhaps taken measures to perpetrate some crime, has fortunately been prevented by an accident which put it out of his power—such a man being "sure, if he has any remains of conscience, to regard this event all his life after as a great and signal deliverance." He can never think of it, our philosopher goes on to say, without returning thanks to Heaven for saving him from actual guilt, and therefore from life-long horror and remorse:—but though his hands are innocent, he is conscious that his heart is equally guilty as if he had executed his resolve. Still, it gives, practically, great ease to his conscience, to consider that the crime was *not* executed, though he knows that the failure arose from no virtue in him. "To remember

how much he was resolved upon it, has no other effect than to make him regard his escape as the greater and more miraculous: for still he fancies that he has escaped, and he looks back upon the danger to which his peace of mind was exposed, with that terror, with which one who is in safety may sometimes remember the hazard he was in of falling over a precipice, and shudder with terror at the thought." For, by one stroke and

> ——in one moment, we may plunge our years
> In fatal penitence, and in the blight
> Of our own soul turn all our blood to tears,
> And colour things to come with hues of Night.

Shakspeare had thought deeply, and has touched repeatedly, on this general subject. The distinction broadly drawn by human judgments between a guilty design and a guilty deed, he illustrates in Bolingbroke's answer to Aumale, when the latter rushes in, and implores pardon beforehand for a yet unavowed crime:

> *Bol.* Intended, or committed, was this fault?
> If but the first, how heinous e'er it be,
> To win thy after-love I pardon thee.

To which a parallel passage might be quoted in Isabella's plea for the life of Angelo:

> Let him not die: My brother had but justice,
> In that he did the thing for which he died:
> For Angelo,
> *His act did not o'ertake his bad intent;*
> *And must be buried but as an intent*
> *That perish'd by the way: thoughts are no subjects;*
> *Intents but merely thoughts.*

Suffolk less charitably pleads, a special pleader, against the spirit of leniency such as this, where he supposes the case of one

> Who being accused a crafty murderer,
> His guilt should be but idly posted over,
> Because his purpose is not executed.

It is too truly objected by English critics, that a French dramatist's notion of virtue would seem to resolve itself into the conception, in the first instance, of some base design against the honour of a friend, or the chastity of a woman, and a valiant conquest of the meditated villainy at the last moment. His hero must sin greatly in thought, before he can prevail upon himself to exhibit a little virtuous instinct in act. His example is that of loose and vagrant passions checked on the eve of consummation by an impulse. "In England, we place the morality of the stage on a different basis. We do not dramatise mental violations of the Decalogue, and take credit to ourselves for the non-commission of crimes which we hold it to be demoralising even to contemplate." We do not sit in the playhouse "merely for the satisfaction of seeing an *imperfect criminal* retreat from his purpose in the end."

> When with a sudden revulsion his heart recoils from its purpose,
> As from the verge of a crag, where one step more is destruction.

Let us hope that the French conception of virtue, as thus delineated, may not take root downward and bear fruit upward, on English soil; and that few censors of our press may have to say of native

fiction what a discerning judge said of a novel happily forgotten, that the author's definition of innocence, so far as it could be made out, is, to be ready and willing to do wicked things, but not yet to have done them.

True, most true, that between the crime designed, and the crime committed, there is a great gulf fixed —by the *communis sensus* of practical ethics. When Œnone reasons with Phèdre,

> Quel crime a pu produire un trouble si pressant?
> Vos mains n'ont point trempé dans le sang innocent?

the wo-begone queen replies,

> Grâces au ciel, mes mains ne sont point criminelles.

But for all that, in her case, it is due alike to rhyme and reason to add,

> Plût aux dieux que mon cœur fût innocent comme elles!

Yet is it something, it is much, that besides her self-reproachful *Plût aux dieux!* she can vent, as regards criminal action, an earnest *Grâces au ciel!* She has not crossed the gulf, which, deep as it may be, it takes but one step to cross. She has not come to the pass of the accomplished criminal, who, in virtue or by vice of his accomplished fact, must fall into the strain of guilty Hesperus, and say,

> Wickedness,
> How easy is thy lesson! Now I stand
> Up to the throat in blood; from Mercy's records
> For evermore my guilty name is razed.
> But yesterday, oh blessed yesterday,
> I was a man;
> And now—I start amazed at myself.

It is a remark of Mr. Disraeli's, that the pursuit of gaming, oftener than any other, leads men to self-knowledge. Appalled, he argues, by the absolute destruction on the verge of which the gamester finds his early youth just stepping; aghast at the shadowy crimes which, under the influence of this life, seem, as it were, to rise upon his soul, often he hurries to emancipate himself from this fatal thraldom, and with a ruined fortune and marred prospects, yet thanks his Creator that his soul is still white, and his conscience clear from those dark stains which Phèdre deprecated, from that one "damned spot" of which all the perfumes of Arabia could not cleanse Lady Macbeth's little hand.

It is Horace's teaching, in one of his seriously reflective moods, that not Heaven itself can annihilate or undo a deed done—*non* tamen irritum Quodcunque retro est, efficiet;

> ——neque
> Diffinget, infectumque reddet
> Quod fugiens semel hora vexit.

> Oh the fierce sense
> Of hopelessness! *The fault is done!* No keen
> Remorse, no holy law of penitence,
> Not God himself *can make it not have been.*
> Tho' Angels whisper peace, that thought comes in between.

Premeditation, writes Mr. Carlyle, is not performance, is not surety of performance; it is perhaps, at most, surety of *letting* whosoever wills perform. From the purpose of crime, he adds, to the act of crime,

there is an abyss: wonderful to think of. "The finger lies on the pistol; but the man is not yet a murderer; nay, his whole nature staggering at such a consummation, is there not a confused pause rather —one last instant of possibility for him? Not yet a murderer; it is at the mercy of light trifles* whether the most fixed idea may not yet become unfixed. One slight twitch of a muscle, the death-flash bursts; and he is it, and will for Eternity be it;—and Earth has become a penal Tartarus for him; his horizon girdled now not with golden hope, but with red flames of remorse; voices from the depth of Nature sounding, Wo, wo on him!"

We may apply in this stern, solemn sense, what Oswald says in Wordsworth's tragedy:

> Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
> *The motion of a muscle—this way or that—*
> *'Tis done*, and in the after-vacancy
> We wonder at ourselves like men betray'd:
> Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
> And shares the nature of infinity.

But this same Oswald is a daring sophist; and in his sneering disdain of compunctious visitings on the part of the man he is tempting to crime, he thus touches on the contingencies of criminal action—

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* So Longfellow, in the context of a passage already cited:

"Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated are moments,
Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the wall adamantine."

Miles Standish, § v.

> What! feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed,
> A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been
> Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.

This consideration of contingencies, this question of to be or not to be, is forcibly illustrated in Schiller's *Wallenstein's Tod.* In the first act of that tragedy, Wallenstein soliloquises in this strain of quasi-fatalism: *Can* he no longer what he *would?* no longer draw back at his liking? he must *do* the deed because he *thought* of it?

> By the great God of Heaven! it was not
> My serious meaning, it was ne'er resolved.
> I but amused myself with thinking of it.

Again and again he pauses, and remains in deep thought. Anon comes the reflection:

> My deed was mine, remaining in my bosom:
> Once suffer'd to escape from its safe corner
> Within the heart, its nursery and birthplace,
> Sent forth into the Foreign, it belongs
> For ever to those sly malicious powers
> Whom never art of man conciliated.

And the scene of agitated hesitancy closes with the moody man's self-gratulation on his conscience being, thus far, free from crime:

> Yet it is pure—as yet!—the crime has come
> Not o'er this threshold yet—so slender is
> The boundary that divideth life's two paths.

Happier he that can put Himself in Hubert's case and honestly affirm,

> ——This hand of mine
> Is yet a maiden and an innocent hand,—
> Not painted with the crimson drops of blood.
> Within this bosom never enter'd yet
> The dreadful motion of a murtherous thought.

A happiness only to be rated aright, perhaps, by an actual "murtherer," like the nameless one from whom Shakspeare wrings the most natural, most unavailing cry,

> O that it were to do!—What have we done?

Well it is, for all of us, that we cannot discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, one in another—cannot detect the almost culprit, the imperfect criminal, under the fair outside of the seemingly perfect gentleman. There is a poem of Barry Cornwall's, devoted to what some might consider a morbid analysis of a friend's "Interior" (that is the name of the piece), in which the person addressed, hitherto reckoned the "flower of jolly, gamesome, rosy friends," is bid

> Unloose your heart, and let me see
> What's hid within that ruby round.

The result of the revelation is, that here "our ill-paired union ends." At least, the intimacy is destroyed. The fellowship is, on second thoughts, allowed to continue—on slacker terms, indeed, and by a frailer tenure, but still a recognised existence such as it may be.

No,—let's jog on, from morn to night;
Less close than we were wont, indeed;
Why should I hate, because I read
The spots kept secret from my sight,
And force some *unborn sins* to light?

Owen Meredith—if that now transparent pseudonym is still to be used—in the opening soliloquy of his Clytemnestra, makes the guilty queen—guilty in thought, and not as yet in deed—meditate on the compunctious visitings that perturb her bosom, and ask herself the reason of all this incurable unrest. Wherefore to her—to her, of all mankind, *this retribution for a deed undone?*

For many men outlive their sum of crimes,
And eat, and drink, and lift up thankful hands,
And take their rest securely in the dark.
Am I not innocent—or more than these?
There is no blot of murder on my brow,
Nor any taint of blood upon my robe.
—It is the thought! it is the thought! . . and men
Judge us by acts! . . . as tho' one thunder-clap
Let all Olympus out.

In fine, the gist of her wistful self-questioning is, why should she, an imperfect criminal, be tortured with remorse as for a perfected crime?

But it comes across her, in an after-stage of her progress towards accomplished guilt, that

Surely sometimes the unseen Eumenides
Do prompt our musing moods with wicked hints,
And lash us for our crimes ere we commit them.

ABOUT A LITTLE CANDLE'S FAR-THROWN BEAMS.

A Cue from Shakspeare.

BRIGHT, to this hour, as when Portia saw it at a distance, on her return to Belmont, shines that little candle in her hall, which suggested to her the moral simile, So shines a good deed in a naughty world. Bright it shines on, still; for Shakspeare lighted it from the perennial fire of his own genius—a light that never was on sea or shore. And in so doing, he did, in his way, what the martyr bishops of the previous generation had done in theirs,—lighted a candle that should never be put out. For when will Shakspeare cease to be read? And while he is read, every one will be familiar with the soft sheen of that taper which attracts Portia's eye, as she nears stately Belmont on her return from Venice:

> That light we see is burning in my hall.
> How far that little candle throws his beams!
> So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

General literature would supply a milky way of such reflected lustres, cared any inquirer to bring

them within focus. Sometimes the light would be perdurable, like Portia's candle; but sometimes evanescent as a will-o'-the-wisp, dim as from the poorest of "dips," or the feeblest of rushlights. Let us, however, glance at a few here and there, of the little candles that throw their beams in story more or less afar.

There is Hero's for instance—though no taper, but a torch—to light Leander through the dark waters to his love:

> The boy beheld,—beheld it from the sea,
> And parted his wet locks, and breath'd with glee,
> And rose in swimming, more triumphantly.

Nightly it thus served for his guiding-star. At times, when winds blew fresh and strong, the "struggling flare seemed out;" but Leander trusted not to seeming, and knew that his watchful Hero was but shielding it with her cloak; and sure enough, in another minute the light would beam forth again all the brighter for that interval of eclipse.

> The people round the country, who from far
> Used to behold the light, thought it a star,
> Set there perhaps by Venus as a wonder,
> To mark the favourite maiden who slept under.
> Therefore they trod about the grounds by day
> Gently; and fishermen at night, they say,
> With reverence kept aloof, cutting their silent way.

How that light went out at last, and with it the light of Hero's life,—is it not written in poems and stories by the score, classical and romantic, old and new?

Who, as Chateaubriand asks, can tell what were the feelings of Columbus, when, after crossing the Atlantic, seemingly in vain—and in the midst of disaffection and revolt—and just about to return to Europe without having gained the object of his voyage,—he perceived afar off a little light on some unknown shore invisible in the darkness of night *(lorsqu'il aperçut une petite lumière sur une terre inconnue que la nuit lui cachait)?* It was about ten o'clock at night that Columbus, says the best of his biographers, stationed on the top of the castle or cabin on the high poop of his vessel, ranging his eye along the dusky horizon, and maintaining an intense and unremitting watch, thought he saw a light glimmering at a great distance. Fearing his eager hopes might deceive him, he called to a companion, asking whether he saw such a light; and was answered, yes. Still dubious whether it might not be some delusion of fancy, Columbus called to another comrade, and made the same inquiry. By the time the latter had ascended the round-house, the light had disappeared. "They saw it once or twice afterwards in sudden and passing gleams, as if it were a torch in the bark of a fisherman, rising and sinking with the waves; or in the hand of some person on shore, borne up and down as he walked from house to house. So transient and uncertain were these gleams, that few attached any importance to them; Columbus, however, considered them as certain signs of land, and, moreover, that the land was inhabited." They continued their course until

two in the morning, when a gun from their consort, the *Pinta*, gave the joyful signal of land. And Chateaubriand's conjectures as to the state of mind of Columbus, naturally occur also to Washington Irving, who concludes that the heroic adventurer's thoughts and feelings in this little space of time must have been tumultuous and intense. At length, in spite of every difficulty and danger, he had accomplished his object. The great mystery of the ocean was revealed; his theory, which had been the scoff of sages, was triumphantly established; he had secured to himself a glory durable as the world itself.

"It is difficult to conceive the feelings of such a man, at such a moment; or the conjectures which must have thronged upon his mind as to the land before him, covered with darkness. That it was fruitful, was evident from the vegetables which floated from its shores. He thought, too, that he perceived the fragrance of aromatic groves. The moving LIGHT he had beheld proved it the residence of man."

The difficulty of conception in every such case may be said to vary with the greatness of the man in question. Peter Bell, to whom a primrose is a primrose, and nothing more, is not lavish of reflections of his own upon any sort of reflected light, whether on sea or shore. But Mr. Carlyle's Philosopher of Clothes is.

As Professor Teufelsdröckh rode through the Schwarzwald, he said to himself: "That little fire which glows star-like across the dark-growing *(nacht-*

ende) moor, where the sooty smith bends over his anvil, and thou hopest to replace thy lost horse-shoe,—is it a detached, separated speck, cut-off from the whole Universe; or indissolubly joined to the whole? Thou fool, that smithy-fire was (primarily) kindled at the Sun; is fed by air that circulates from before Noah's Deluge, from beyond the Dog-star; therein, with Iron Force, and Coal Force, and the far stronger Force of Man, are cunning affinities and battles and victories of Force brought about; it is a little ganglion, or nervous centre, in the great vital system of Immensity." Not every wayfarer over lonely moors, whose eye catches a distant gleam—be it from smithy or cottage casement—is qualified or inclined to philosophise over it, as does Mr. Carlyle's transcendental Teuton to whom we owe the Philosophy of Clothes.

When Bunyan's Christian, in the very first stage of his pilgrim-progress, receives from Evangelist the parchment which bids him flee away, his troubled query at once is, "Whither must I fly?" Then says Evangelist (pointing with his finger over a very wide field), "Do you see yonder wicket-gate?" But Christian sees it not. "Then said the other, 'Do you see yonder shining light?' He said, 'I think I do.' Then said Evangelist, 'Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate.'" And to Christian that little light thus dimly seen afar off, may be said to have been indeed a shining light, shining more and more into the perfect day.

Light may mark the *terminus ad quem* as well

as the *terminus à quo* of a pilgrim's progress. It is usual, we are told, in the southern parts of France, to erect in the churchyard a lofty pillar, bearing a large lamp, which throws its light upon the cemetery during the night: a custom which appears to have been commenced in the twelfth or thirteenth century; the *lanterne des morts* being somtimes a highly ornamented chapel, built in a circular form, like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, in which the dead lay exposed to view in the days which preceded their interment; sometimes merely a hollow column, ascended by winding stairs inside, or by projections left for the purpose within. It must have been a striking sight, as Dr. Boyd remarks, "when the traveller, through the dark night, saw far away the lonely flame that marked the spot where so many of his fellow-men had completed their journey."

The fairy tales that delighted our childhood reflect many a light from afar, for which a place is lit up in the memory while memory shall last. There is the wayfaring merchant, Beauty's father,—benighted and belated and benumbed in the savage forest,—when he first catches a glimpse, through the gloom, of the mansion of the Beast. "All at once, he now cast his eyes towards a long row of trees, and saw a light at the end of them, but it seèmed a great way off. He made the best of his way towards it, and found that it came from a fine palace lighted all over." Then again we have Hop-o'-my-thumb and his brothers lost in the wood—wet to the skin with

night rains, slipping in the mire at every step, and frightened at the wind among the trees, that sounds like the howling of wolves. Anon Hop-o'-my-thumb manages to climb a tree, and look round about for any possible help. "He saw a small light, like that of a candle, but it was a very great way off, and beyond the forest." The little band of brothers wend their weary way towards the spot—and at last reaching the end of the forest, get a glimpse of the light again. "They now walked faster; and after being much tired and vexed (for every time they got into a bottom they lost sight of the light), they came to the house it was in"—which house the reader of course remembers as that of an Ogre who eats up little boys and girls.—Then, too, there is the Prince, without a name, destined bridegroom of a white cat, who, wandering he knows not whither, finds himself in a forest—and night comes on suddenly, and with it a violent storm of thunder, lightning, and rain. "To add to this perplexity, he lost his path, and could find no way out of the forest. After he had groped about for a long while, he perceived a light, which made him suppose that he was not far from some house; he accordingly pursued his way towards it, and in a short time found himself at the gates of the most magnificent palace he had ever beheld." And thereby hangs *the* tale.

The messenger, in Tasso, who tells sage Godfrey of the Prince of Denmark's "valour, death, and end,"—has to relate his own adventure after the

battle: how he was left on the field for dead, and by what means he recovered:

> But when I opened first mine eyes again,
> Night's curtain black upon the earth was spread,
> And through the darkness to my feeble sight
> Appear'd the twinkling of a slender light.

Of our own poets, Wordsworth is noteworthy for frequent and varied illustration—not to say it punningly—of our taper text. There is the light that gladdens his Waggoner in the night-storm,—shining from the window of that road-side inn, the Cherry Tree. There is that picturesque sonnet which may and shall, for the subject's sake, be quoted whole and entire:

> Even as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
> Of a bedimming sleep, or as a lamp
> Suddenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
> So burns yon Taper 'mid a black recess
> Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless:
> The lake below reflects it not; the sky
> Muffled in clouds, affords no company
> To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
> Yet, round the body of that joyless Thing
> Which sends so far its melancholy light,
> Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
> A gay society with faces bright,
> Conversing, reading, laughing;—or they sing,
> While hearts and voices in the song unite.

The wanderer in this poet's tale of Guilt and Sorrow, has this to make more dreary his night wanderings over Salisbury Plain, that no taper from afar serves to cheer or guide his weary steps. All

to him was dark and void as ocean's watery realm roaring with storms beneath night's cheerless gloom:

> No gipsy cowered o'er fire of furze or broom;
> No labourer watched his red kiln glaring bright,
> Nor taper glimmer'd dim from sick man's room;
> Along the waste no line of mournful light
> From lamp of lonely toll-gate streamed athwart the night.

But the most impressive passage in Wordsworth bearing on our theme, is that which describes, in one of his very finest poems, the lamp that was kept burning—"early at evening did it burn—and late," in the shepherd's cot of old Michael, upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale.

> This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
> And was a public symbol of the life
> That thrifty Pair had led. For, as it chanced,
> Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
> Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
> High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
> And westward to the village near the lake;
> And from this constant light, so regular
> And so far seen, the House itself, by all
> Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
> Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Dipping into Longfellow for an illustration, we light on John Alden, when,

> Leaving behind him the shore, he hurried along in the twilight,
> Through the congenial gloom of the forest silent and sombre,
> Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of Plymouth,
> Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist of the evening.

Mr. Hawthorne humanely remarked, in one of his earliest papers, desultory and digressive, but delightful—those rolling stones that yet gathered Moss (from an old Manse)—that we lose much of the enjoyment of fireside heat (he is treating of a lone house) when we miss an opportunity of marking its effect on those who have been or are exposed to inclement weather. "Afar, the wayfarer discerns the flickering flame, as it dances upon the windows, and hails it as a beacon-light of humanity, reminding him, in his cold and lonely path, that the world is not all snow, and solitude, and desolation." If the wayfarer sees in it the light of home, it is to him as the light of life. Who but sympathises with such a passage as that in the memoirs of Patrick Fraser Tytler, which tells how, when his father, Lord Woodhouselee, was detained in Edinburgh till late in the evening, his children always used to place a candle in his library window, which commanded a most extensive view of the distant country; and how often the loving father remarked that he never gained sight of this twinkling light through the trees of the avenue, without "feeling his heart raised in gratitude to Heaven for the many blessings by which he was surrounded, and the happy home to which he was returning."

Perhaps there is scarcely a novel of all the many Sir Walter wrote, from "Waverley" to "Castle Dangerous" (what a fall was there!), but contains some sort of illustration to the purpose. The reader will remember Roland Graeme gazing from the

Queen's chamber in the Castle of Lochleven, at the several lights that glimmer palely through the grey of the evening from the village of Kinross,—and noting one solitary spark apart from the rest, and nearer the verge of the water. "It is no brighter at this distance," says the royal prisoner, "than the torch of the poor glow-worm, and yet . . . that light is more dear to Mary Stewart, than every star that twinkles in the blue vault of heaven." For by that signal the captive queen knows that more true hearts than one are plotting her deliverance; and without that consciousness, and the hope of freedom it gives her, she had long since stooped to her fate, and died of a broken heart. Plan after plan, she tells Roland, has been formed and abandoned, but still the light glimmers; and while it glimmers, her hope lives.—"O! how many evenings have I sat musing in despair over our ruined schemes, and scarce hoping that I should again see that blessed signal; when it has suddenly kindled, and, like the lights of Saint Elmo in a tempest, brought hope and consolation, where there was only dejection and despair!" The stern old Lady of Lochleven has hitherto been led to suppose these lights across the loch to be corpse-candles; but she is beginning now to suspect them to come, not from the churchyard, but from the hut of that churl, Blinkhoolie,—and wonders accordingly what thrift the old gardener drives, that he ever has light in his house till the night grows deep. This must be looked after to-morrow, she resolves. But,

thanks to Blinkhoolie's signal, the queen escapes to-night.

Then again, glance at that highest turret among the towers of Woodstock, from which there gleams a light as of a candle within the building—to the affright of the Mayor, who deems a light from Rosamond's Tower a something preternatural, and is assured that it burns with no earthly fuel—neither from whale nor olive oil, nor beeswax, nor mutton suets, either: his worship's trading experience in these commodities enabling and entitling him to speak with confidence in the matter; for he is persuaded he can distinguish the sort of light they give, one from another, at a greater distance than yonder turret. It is a long way further on in the story when Holdenough whispers to Everard, as they walk together by night in the Chase,—"See ye not —yonder flutters the mysterious light in the turret of the incontinent Rosamond?" And with this light the future of another Stewart is concerned—for it is a life-and-death matter to Charles, the grandson of Mary's son.

Once more, there is the light that so perplexes Francis Osbaldistone when it gleams of a night from Diana Vernon's room, and betrays a second shadow present there, beside her own:

> Yon lamp its line of quivering light
> Shoots from my lady's bower;
> But why should Beauty's lamp be bright
> At midnight's lonely hour?

Among the *Crimes Célèbres* there is a story based

on fact, with the appropriate French embellishment, of a fisherman's daughter who is scrupulous ever to keep a lamp burning before the Madonna in her chamber. Her brother, Gabriel, keeps an anxious eye on this light, as his boat is beaten about by the waves, on a dark and stormy night at sea. He explains to a companion the history of "that lamp gleaming yonder in the distance." It was lit before the Virgin, on the day of his sister's birth; and for eighteen years, up to the night of this oral narrative, had been kept burning night and day. "My poor mother summoned me to her death-bed, and told me a fearful story, a horrible mystery, which weighs upon my soul like lead, and from which I can never ease myself by confiding it to a friend. When her dreadful tale was finished, she demanded to see and embrace my new-born sister, and then attempted with her own trembling hand to light the lamp we speak of. 'Remember,'—these were her last words,—'remember, Gabriel, that your sister is devoted to the Madonna. So long as this lamp shall continue burning before the sacred image, your sister will remain secure from all dangers.' You can now understand why, whenever we two are out upon the bay, my eyes are always fixed upon that lamp." For Gabriel has a conviction that, as no evil will befal her while it is kept burning, so, on the day it is extinguished, will Nisida's light of life be extinguished too.—Scarcely has he ended his story, all the while keeping his eye on the light, attracted by a fascination irresistible in its force,—when suddenly he utters a

terrible cry, which is heard above the din of the tempest. "The light had disappeared; the lamp was extinguished. 'My sister is dead!' cried Gabriel, and plunging into the sea, he fought his way through the billows with"—so M. Dumas at least describes it—"the rapidity of a thunderbolt."

The reader may be reminded of Mr. Hawthorne's Hilda, in her tower at Rome, with the Virgin for her household friend, as Kenyon the sculptor tells her: "You know not how far it throws its light, that lamp, which you keep burning at her shrine. I passed beneath the tower last night, and the ray cheered me—because you lighted it." Towards the sombre close of the tale, when a presentiment of some calamity to Hilda oppressed the sculptor's mind, we see him hasten by night towards the tower, and eagerly gaze on the Virgin's lamp that twinkles on the summit. Feeble as it is, in the broad, surrounding gloom, that little ray makes no inconsiderable illumination in Kenyon's gloomy thoughts, for a fantasy had seized him that he should find the sacred lamp extinguished. "And even while he stood gazing, as a mariner at the star in which he puts his trust, the light quivered, sank, gleamed up again, and finally went out, leaving the battlements of Hilda's tower in utter darkness. For the first time in centuries, the consecrated and legendary flame before the loftiest shrine in Rome had ceased to burn."

Any mention of light in tower-top at once recals Milton's aspiration of the melancholy man:

Or let my lamp at midnight hour
Be seen in some high lonely tower.

And amid the many illustrative examples that literature suggests, a notable one is M. Victor Hugo's instance of the archdeacon's cell, close to the belfry, in the cathedral of Notre-Dame,—of which cell, and the midnight studies of its occupant, nothing is known to outsiders, though a good deal is guessed by them, as they sometimes watch a strange, red, intermitting light, seen through a small window at the back of the tower. Note again Claude Frollo's despairing ascent to Quasimodo's tower, taking the lamp of the breviary to light him: ("this was a sacrilege; but he no longer regarded such a trifle as that.") Slowly he ascends the staircase of the tower, filled with a secret dread, which is communicated to the passengers who now and then cross the Parvis, on seeing the mysterious light of his lamp mounting so late from loophole to loophole to the top of the tower. Or again, Quasimodo on the tower-top, surveying Paris one very dark night,—Paris being then scarcely lighted at all, and so presenting to the eye a confused aggregate of black masses, intersected here and there by the whitish curve of the Seine: "Quasimodo could discern no light but in the window of a distant building, the vague and sombre outline of which was visible above the roofs in the direction of the gate of St. Antoine. There, too, was some one who watched." As in Mr. Barham's night-picture of Tappington Hall,

All is darksome in earth and sky,
Save from yonder casement, narrow and high,
A quivering beam
On the tiny stream
Plays, like some taper's fitful gleam
By one that is watching wearily.

The single light which Quasimodo discovered, in his survey of Paris from the top of his tower, illumined a window in the uppermost floor of a lofty and gloomy building by the gate of St. Antoine. This building was the Bastile. The light was the candle of Lewis XI. A bit of information which ushers in the critical chapter wherein M. Hugo describes in characteristic detail the retreat where Monsieur Louis of France said his prayers.

On the night that Margaret, in Mr. Charles Reade's "Cloister and Hearth," lures her husband, Gerard that was, Father Clement that is, from the hermitage in all its desolation, to the manse at Gouda in all its comfort, a candle is seen burning in the vicar's parlour as they draw near. "Beautiful! beautiful!" exclaims Clement, and stops to look at it. "What is beautiful?" asks Margaret. And his answer is: "That little candle, seen through the window at night. Look an it be not like some fair star of size prodigious: it delighteth the eyes and warmeth the heart of those outside." The night, as we read, elsewhere, was an eventful one to both, on which these true and tempest-tossed lovers went hand in hand beneath the stars from Gouda hermitage to Gouda manse.

In Mr. Dickens's story, "The Battle of Life," there is a high-wrought description of the night of Alfred's return: how the Doctor, all impatience for his coming, bids them, at twelve o'clock, stir up the fire and throw more logs upon it, that Alfred may see his welcome blazing out upon the night, as he comes along. And "he saw it—Yes! From the chaise he caught the light, as he turned the corner by the old church. He knew the room from which it shone. He saw the wintry branches of the old trees between the light and him. . . . Again the light! Distinct and ruddy; kindled, he knew, to give him welcome, and to speed him home." And then we read how the eager wayfarer beckoned with his hand, and waved his hat, and cheered out, loud, as if the light were they, and they could see and hear him, as he dashed towards them through the mud and mire, triumphantly.

John Galt drenches his Andrew Wylie to the skin, and appals him with a thunderstorm, and overwhelms him with despair, all in one page, ere he suffers the downcast wight to "discover a light at some distance. It was low, dim, and red; but it was to him like the hospitable eye of a friend, and he rose and walked cautiously towards it. In a short time he found himself again in the forest, but still the light was beaming and alluring him forward"—and the pawky carle took care rather to force his way through brambles and all kinds of unkindly underwood, than, by deviating from his rugged path, to lose sight of that friendly gleam.

Lord Lytton in like manner drenches Philip and Sidney Morton in a midnight storm—the younger brother sinking, tired and worn-out, on the roadside. Darkness is above them, and all around them,—darkness that may be felt. But suddenly in the distance there "gleamed a red, steady light, like that in some solitary window; it was no will-o'-the-wisp, it was too stationary"—human shelter was then nearer than Philip had dared think for; and with hope revived, he bade Sidney look up, and hope too.

Janet Dempster, in "George Eliot's" story, is made to tread slowly with her naked feet on the rough pavement, the night her husband has turned her out of doors into "the stony street, the bitter north-east wind and darkness"—supporting herself by the wall, as the gusts of wind (for the very wind is cruel that night) drive right against her. The glimmer of a rushlight from a room where a friend is lying, is like a ray of mercy to Janet, after that long, long time of darkness and loneliness.

A living divine—of note for a successful head-mastership at Harrow, and for the rare fact that really and truly he *noluit Episcopari*—has moralised on the thought how great a difference there is between a little light and none, when you have lost your way, even on almost familiar ground. You go round and round, and grope for this object or that, but all is darkness, and you begin to fear you must spend the long hours of night shelterless. "At last a feeble glimmering becomes perceptible in a distant

quarter: a rushlight in a cottage window, a lantern in a farmhouse shed, it is enough for hope in that perplexity: you make for it, and you are safe." And of course the deeper you are in a quite unknown *lucus* (*a non lucendo*), the more precious any the tiniest *lux* becomes, however distant and however dim.

Follow Mr. Charles Reade's hero, Gerard Eliassoen, into the German forest, a benighted stranger, groping his way in what seemed to him an interminable and inky cave with a rugged floor, on which he stumbled and stumbled as he went: on, and on, and on, with shivering limbs, and empty stomach, and fainting heart, till the wolves rose from their lairs and bayed all round the wood; and Gerard's excited ear heard light feet patter at times over the newly fallen leaves, and low branches rustle with creatures gliding swiftly past them. "Presently, in the sea of ink, there was a great fiery star close to the ground. He hailed it as he would a patron saint. 'CANDLE! a CANDLE!'* he shouted, and tried to run; but the dark and rugged way soon stopped that. The light was more distant than he had thought; but at last in the very heart of the forest he found a house with lighted candles and loud voices inside it."

Dr. Croly's Salathiel, benighted and stumbling on the dark mountains, with a torrent bellowing before him, and a wall of rock on the opposite side,—chafing

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* The capitals are of course Mr. Reade's own peculiar. He is given to *all* sorts of tricks in typography. Well, he can afford it.

the while at ruinous delay,—strains his aching gaze in vain for some little candle's far-thrown beams. "After long climbings and descents, I found that I had descended too deep to return. Oh, how I longed for the trace of man, for the feeblest light that ever twinkled from cottage window!" One recalls Thomson's autumnal night picture:

> Drear is the state of the benighted wretch,
> Who then, bewildered, wanders through the dark,
> Full of pale fancies, and chimeras huge;
> Nor visited by one directive ray,
> From cottage streaming, or from airy hall.

In another poem Thomson pictures Selvaggio pricking through the forest, before daybreak:

> Deep in the winding bosom of a lawn,
> With wood wild fringed, he marked a taper's ray,
> That from the beating rain, and wintry fray,
> Did to a lonely cot his steps decoy.

Always remembrable by readers of "Jane Eyre" is the scene of the fugitive girl's night wanderings on the moors—wet through—hungry, faint, cold, and desolate. In vain her glazed eye is strained over the dim and misty landscape. It remains at last only to find a hollow where she can lie down; but all the surface of the waste seems level. Her eye is still roving over the drenched ground, and along the moor-edge, that vanishes amid wildest scenery, when at one dim point, far in among the marshes and the ridges, a light springs up. "That is an *ignis fatuus*," is Jane's first thought; and she ex-

pects it will soon vanish. It burns on, however, quite steadily, neither receding nor advancing. "It may be a candle in a house," she then conjectures; "but if so I can never reach it." And she sinks down where she stood, and hides her face against the ground,—and lies still a while; the night-wind sweeps over her, and dies moaning in the distance. Anon she rises: the light is yet there: shining dim, but constant, through the rain. She tries to walk again, and drags her exhausted limbs slowly towards it. "It led me aslant over the hill, through a wide bog; which would have been impassable in winter, and was plashy and shaking even now, in the height of summer. Here I fell twice; but as often I rose and rallied my faculties. This light was my forlorn hope: I must gain it." As gain it at last she does.

In one of the fictions published by Miss Braddon before "Lady Audley's Secret," and probably more audaciously and systematically sensational than any of its successors, how many or how sensational soever they be, there is a wild scene on a dreary heath, in a midnight storm—a dying man in a hovel, to which a girl is hastening, dripping wet with the pelting rain. "The feeble glimmer of the candle with the drooping wick, sputtering in a pool of grease, is the only light which illumines that cheerless neighbourhood. The girl's heart beats with a terrible flutter as she approaches that light, for an agonising doubt is in her soul about that *other light;* which she left so feebly burning, and which may be now extinct."

A lady-novelist of quite another school—almost as fertile a writer as Miss Braddon, and perhaps not so very much a less popular one (for it argues a real popularity to be selected to write at once for *Blackwood* and *Good Words*)—makes much in "Madonna Mary" of a certain light in the mansion, as watched by a certain young lady in the cottage. Winnie is again and again depicted in wistful scrutiny of the light at Sir Edward's—betokening the presence of one who is provokingly absent from her. "The light in Sir Edward's window shone afar off on the tree-tops, shedding an irritating influence upon Winnie when she looked up." And again: "Sir Edward's window still threw its distant light over the tree-tops, and the sight of it made her smouldering passion blaze." And later: "From the moment when she had seen Sir Edward's window suddenly gleam into the twilight, matters had changed."—"And when Sir Edward's windows were lighted once more, and the certainty that he [Captain Percival] was not coming penetrated her mind, Winnie clenched her pretty hands, and went crazy for the moment with despite and vexation."

Chateaubriand's René reclines at nightfall on a rock, and listens to the murmur of the waves, as he fixes his gaze on the sombre walls of the monastery within which his Amelia is immured. "Une petite lumière paraissait à la fenêtre grillée. Etait-ce toi, o mon Amélie, qui, prosternée au pied du crucifix, priais le Dieu des orages d'épargner ton malheureux frère ?"

Mr. Thackeray's last hero, Denis Duval—the narrative of whose career, with its lamented author's, was cut short too soon, so much too soon—being wisely counselled by good old Doctor Bernard against continuing the smuggling practices into which his innocent boyhood had been inveigled, makes a vow, the same night, after drinking tea with his dear doctor, that he will strive henceforth to lead an honest life—that his tongue shall speak the truth, and his hand be sullied by no secret crime. "And as I spoke," he writes, in the tender retrospect of some threescore years, "I saw my dearest little maiden's light glimmering in her chamber, and the stars shining overhead, and felt—who could feel more bold and happy than I?

"That walk schoolwards by West-street [where dwelt Agnes, the little maiden of his regards] certainly was a *détour*. I might have gone a straighter road, but then I should not have seen *a certain window;* a little twinkling window in a gable of the Priory House, where the light used to be popped out at nine o'clock."*

Mrs. Inchbald, who was one of Dr. Warren's

* "T'other day, when we took over the King of France to Calais (his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence being in command), I must needs hire a post-chaise from Dover, to look at that old window in the Priory House at Winchelsea. I sighed as sentimentally, after forty years, as though the *infandi dolores* were fresh upon me, as though I were the schoolboy trudging back to his task, and taking a last look at his dearest joy."—Denis Duval, ch. vi.

patients, was secretly in love with that most engaging of physicians, and used to pace Sackville-street after dark, purely to have the pleasure of seeing the light in his window. That is a town picture. But the heart of man (and woman) is alike, in town and country; and here is a country one: (what though the one be fact, and the other fiction? *c'est egal*, where the heart is concerned:)

> And oft in ramblings on the wold,
> When April's nights began to blow,
> And April's crescent glittered cold,
> I saw the village lights below;
> I knew your taper far away,
> And full at heart of trembling hope,
> From off the wold I came, and lay
> Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

Here again we are in the streets:

> The sunset wanes
> From twinkling panes.
> Dim, misty myriads move
> Down glimmering streets. One light I see—
> One happy light, that shines for me,
> And lights me to my love.

HISTORICAL MIGHT, COULD, SHOULD, OR WOULD HAVE BEENS.

A Vexed Question.

BOLINGBROKE observes that the great benefit we ought to reap from the study of history, cannot be reaped unless we accustom ourselves to compare the conduct of different governments, and different parties, in the same conjunctures, and to notice the measures they did pursue, and the measures they might have pursued, with the actual consequences that followed one, and the possible, or probable consequences that might have followed the other.

In favour of those who, on the other hand, reject as futile and frivolous the potential, or subjunctive, mood of historical narrative, might be applied, with a twist in its meaning, a sentence of the same accomplished St. John in a previous letter,—to wit, that what might have happened, is matter only for ingenious fiction; what has happened, is that of authentic history.

And yet what writer, however sober and solid, of what history, however authentic, but loves to pause,

at intervals, in his narrative of actual events, that he may speculate, in passing, on what might have been, had but things taken another turn? Such a small screw loose in the machinery of events might have, or perhaps must have, involved such a different result. So trifling a change in the chapter of accidents, and then and therefore so enormous a revolution in the grand finale. The most prosaic of historians can scarcely resist the fascination of a conjectural fling, when the illimitable possibilities of a diversely-ordered sequence glance across his plodding brain.

History is full, indeed, as a Saturday Reviewer remarks, of such puzzles as, what would have been the destiny of England if Cromwell had actually sailed for America? What would have happened if Napoleon had won the Battle of Waterloo? What, in fact, would have been the consequences if one person had met, or had not met, another—or if anything had turned out to be something different, and everybody had proved to be somebody else?—is one of the most interesting and inexhaustible of all branches of human inquiry.

Curtly characterised as "silly flippancy" is a grave professor's expression of wonder what would have been the condition of the world "if little Eve" (so the *olli subridens* author of the "Eclipse of Faith" is pleased to call her) "had eaten, and Adam had not; if he had politely handed her ladyship to the side door in the wall of Paradise: told her that 'separate maintenance' would be her lot on the other

side, 'amongst the thorns and thistles,' and so fairly turned the key upon her?" Orthodox and decent dulness must indeed dearly love a joke, irrespective of quality, if it can find good fun in this, or perhaps anything but bad taste.

A more uniformly grave Professor has remarked that only by picturing to ourselves what might have been the state of Europe had Charles Martel failed to stem the northward progress of the Saracenic hosts; what might have been the condition of England had there been no storm or tempest to scatter the ships of Philip and Spain, can we take a true estimate of all that was involved in the battle of Tours, in the fate of the Invincible Armada. And the remark is made introductory of a speculation on what would have been the history of Israel if the revolt of Absalom had been successful. In that case the Professor infers that instead of a reign like that of Solomon, a time of culture, commerce, and intellectual progress, there would have been one of violence, and licence, and dynastic strife; that the wisdom of Solomon, the glory of Solomon, would have been unknown to us; that the priesthood would have become, more rapidly than it did, contemptible and base; that the rebellion would have brought back the lawlessness of the time of the Judges; that the school of the prophets would have been suppressed; and that we might have known little or nothing of the history of Israel: for, though a "few fragments of the wondrous story and ancient laws that gathered round the name of Moses, a few songs

bearing the name of David, might have escaped the wear and tear of time," yet that we should have had an Old Testament (if an Old Testament had in that case been possible), without the Prophets, without the Books of Solomon, without a History of the Monarchy of Judah.

It is a bitter thought, to Mr. John Stuart Mill, how different a thing the Christianity of the world might have been, if the Christian faith had been adopted as the religion of the empire under the auspices of Marcus Aurelius instead of those of Constantine.

Mr. Lothrop Motley, in his comparative estimate of Gaul and German, is of opinion that, "had Providence permitted a fusion of the two races, it is possible, from their position, and from the geographical and historical link which they would have afforded to the dominant tribes of Europe, that a world-empire might have been the result, different in many respects from any which has ever arisen." A tolerably safe reckoning. But, he sententiously adds, "Speculations upon what might have been are idle." As Shakspeare's Antonio might be made to mean,

> ——What might,
> Worthy Sebastian?—O what might?—No more.

Or to apply in a like sense the words of another Shakspearean personage,—

> You speak, Lord Mowbray, now, you know not what.

Mr. Froude, in his historical essay on Mary Tudor,

says we may congratulate ourselves that her early life and education had left that unhappy queen what she was, else might Cranmer's prayer-book and Articles have perished with himself; the Church of England, like the Church of France, might have risen out of the confusion of the sixteenth century, a moderate Catholicism; and the course of all European history have been different. On another page, referring to the previous reign, he contends, that the Reformation was so rapidly discrediting itself, that if Edward had not died, and the policy of the government had remained unchanged, the same rebellions, supported by the same coalitions from abroad, which were so formidable to Elizabeth, would in all probability have broken out irresistibly against Edward, and swept away the very name of Protestant out of the country.—Then, again, of the last three years of Mary's reign he affirms, that the events of those years would have inevitably precipitated a revolution if her breaking health had not enabled her subjects to expect an early remedy in natural causes. "There is no doubt how the struggle would have ended, but while it lasted it would have been inconceivably dreadful; and instead of the long glorious peace of Elizabeth, when the population doubled their numbers, and trebled their wealth, the best blood of England would have flowed away on new fields of Towton or of Barnet, and the Protestants might only have found themselves conquerors, to bleed to death on the scene of their victory."—Nor can he refrain from charitably speculating on what Mary Tudor

might have been, if her husband had treated her even with ordinary kindness. In that case she might have been known to history by an epithet the reverse of that which brands her now. "It might have been so; and those dark blots which will now lie upon her name for ever, might either never have been, or have been washed away by repentance. There is no saying. History is not of what might have been, but of what was; which, indeed, is perhaps all that could have been."

When the Duke of Gandia, Francis Borgia, eventually General of the Jesuits, was pressed by Philip of Spain to accept the office of grand master of the royal household, he declined it in favour of the Duke of Alva; and the refusal suggests to Sir James Stephen the reflection, that had Gandia preferred the duties of his secular rank to his religious aspirations, Spain might have had a saint the less and seven provinces the more; for, with the elevation of Alva, the butcheries in the Netherlands, the disgrace of Spain, and the independence of Holland might have been averted.

M. Michelet supposes the Elector to have acquiesced in the demands of Rome, and to have given up Luther in exchange for the golden rose. In that case, the assumed sequel of the assumed hypothesis is, that Luther, burnt by Leo the Tenth, would have met with the fate of Arnold of Brescia, of Savonarola, of Giordano Bruno, and ever so many others. The Reformation, once again stifled, would have left the old system to rot away in peace—*pourrir sa*

pourriture paisiblement. No Protestants, from that time forth, nor Jesuits either; no Jansenius, no Bossuet, no Voltaire. *Autre était la scène du monde.*

The French are at the least as fond as any other people of speculating in historical might-have-beens. Notably so is Chateaubriand; in whose writings one is so frequently meeting with such conjectural queries as this: "Lewis the Sixteenth abdicating, and Lewis the Seventeenth placed on the throne, and the Duke of Orleans declared Regent,—what would have happened in that case?" A query which M. de Marcellus answered by alleging the probability of the result, in that case, being identical with the course of events in 1830. Change the names and the date: Charles the Tenth abdicating, Henry the Fifth called to the throne, and the Duke of Orleans declared Regent, saved nothing, he says.

No one, in studying the closing years of Lewis the Fourteenth, M. Sainte-Beuve remarks, can come across the singular figure—*originale, singulière, et assez difficile*—of Fénélon's pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, without putting to oneself the question, What sort of difference would it have made in history, and what sort of turn would things have taken in France, had this particular and quite peculiar Dauphin lived? —Oh, the illimitable potentialities of the potential mood!

> Had doting Priam checked his son's desire,
> Troy had been bright with fame, and not with fire.

Plenipotent in Ifs, in a serried series of *si, si,* is a

passage in M. de Lamartine's History of the Girondins, where he says that if the king had been firm and sagacious, if the clergy had been free from a longing for things temporal, and if the aristocracy had been good; if the people had been moderate, if Mirabeau had been honest, if La Fayette had been decided, if Robespierre had been humane; if, in short, all this, and that, and the other,—well, what then? Why, then "the Revolution would have progressed, majestic and calm as a heavenly thought, through France, and thence through Europe; it would have been installed like a philosophy in facts, in laws, and in creeds." What a deal may depend upon an If, one little If,—how much more upon a concatenation of them which makes Mirabeau incorrupt, and La Fayette resolute, and Robespierre a rose-water philanthropist, and Lewis the Sixteenth equally long-headed and firm-hearted, and his people a pattern of all that is temperate, disciplined, and self-restrained!

The fact that Rousseau commenced his literary career *par le petit journal*,—that together with Diderot he published the *Persifleur*, and that the *Persifleur* never reached a second number,—leads M. Arsène Houssaye to imagine what might have happened, to Jean-Jacques, and to France, and to the world, if that journal had been successful, and if Jean-Jacques and Denis had made their fortune by it, and so been in capital spirits with themselves and society at large. In that case, there is no such thing as the *Encyclopédie*. Diderot has no occasion to en-

list Voltaire in the cause of destruction; Rousseau no call to sow broadcast in France his republican crotchets; Lewis the Sixteenth may die on the throne; and Frenchmen of to-day are loyal subjects to his lineal successor, a Lewis almost out of his (Lewisian) teens—say the Eighteenth or Nineteenth —king of France and Navarre.

Daniel De Foe wrote, in 1714, on the death of Queen Anne, a pamphlet entitled the Secret History of the White Staff; being an account, among other things, "of what might probably have happened if the Queen had not died."

The elder Disraeli contributed to his Curiosities of Literature a scheme of "a History of Events which Have Not Happened." A proposed chapter in which is, "The Battle of Worcester won [*not* lost] by Charles the Second." Historians, it is there remarked, have sometimes, for a particular purpose, amused themselves with detailing an event which did not happen. A history of which kind is cited from the ninth book of Livy,—"where, with his delightful copiousness, he reasons on the probable consequences which would have ensued had Alexander the Great invaded Italy." Livy, says Archdeacon Williams, is very eloquent in his attempt to prove, that if Alexander had invaded Italy he would have been assuredly defeated and vanquished by the Romans. Alexander's venerable (because archidiaconal) biographer is confident, on the other hand, that the Romans had not a chance (under a Papirius Cursor too!) against the conqueror of the East. If, in later

years, it is argued, Pyrrhus, the needy prince of the small kingdom of Epirus, with his confined means, shook Rome to her foundations, it is idle to suppose that, in a far feebler state, she could for a moment have withstood the whirlwind shock of Alexander's chivalry.

But to return to Mr. Disraeli,—Isaac, father of Benjamin. The battle of Tours, lost by Charles Martel, is another of his conjectural suggestions—the result being the predominance throughout Europe of the Mahometan dominion. Again, Father Isaac rather adventurously surmises that the Reformation might "perhaps have not occurred, had the personal feelings of Luther been respected, and had his personal interest been consulted." Also, that had not Henry VIII. been influenced by the most violent of passions, ("for Gospel light first beamed from Bullen's eyes,") England might never to this day have shaken off the papal thraldom! Then again, that had the armada of Spain safely landed here, with the benedictions of Rome, at a moment when our fleet was short of gunpowder, "we might now be going to mass." Item: what a wonderful difference to Christendom had Gustavus Adolphus not fallen in the battle of Lutzen! Item: what a change in the affairs of Europe had Cromwell adopted the Spanish interest, and assisted the French Huguenots in becoming an independent state! "The revocation of the edict of Nantes, and the increase of the French dominion, which so long afterwards disturbed the peace of Europe, were the consequences

of this fatal error of Cromwell's. The independent state of the French Huguenots, and the reduction of ambitious France, perhaps, to a secondary European power, had saved Europe from the scourge of the French revolution."

To the like effect, though in characteristic phraseology too peremptory for a perhaps, Sir Archibald Alison expressly and explicitly asserts, that "had Louis XIV. not sent half a million of innocent Protestants into exile, his descendants would not have been now suppliants in foreign lands."

Great stress being laid by Mr. Townend on the conversion to the Romish faith, in 1646, of Prince Edward, the fifth son of the Queen of Bohemia, as a most important and leading transaction in the course of English history, comment was reasonably made on the subject, by a not common-place critic, to this effect: that undoubtedly if Prince Edward had not taken that one step, and if everything else in the world had happened as in fact it did happen for the next seventy years, his representatives might have sat upon the British throne; but that if the course of the world is once altered in the speculations of the historian, it is hard to see why the alteration should stop at one leap more than another. "Before the moralising reader has recovered his equanimity after the consideration of Mr. Townend's first problem of historical chances, he is called upon to stigmatise the folly of the Royal Family of Denmark in preventing one of its princes from marrying the penniless Princess Palatine Elizabeth, afterwards

Abbess of Hervord:—'How blind men often are in their fancied wisdom and foresight is proved by this event; for had Waldemar married Elizabeth, *and had children*, they, in preference to the Princess Sophia's, would have succeeded to the Crown of Great Britain. So that a younger brother of Denmark was forbidden to marry an illustrious English princess on account of her fancied poverty, when, in reality, he would have espoused, *had she lived long enough*, the future Queen of England!"*

We are told that when Elizabeth was in bad health, during Mary Stewart's imprisonment, the Countess of Shrewsbury had her son purposely residing in London, with two horses continually ready to bear to the captive the earliest intelligence of her cousin's death. And one of the Queen of Scots' vindicators waxes perfervid in surmising what might have happened, "had this not improbable event actually taken place." Mary, he assumes, would have been carried from a prison to a throne, amid universal applause, and "her tyrannical cousin" would have been known as quite an *in*glorious Bess.

* "It is easy now to speculate on hypothetical children, who might have been rulers over all lands, had they ever existed. . . . The 'fancied' poverty was an undeniable reality; and as Elizabeth, 'had she lived long enough,' would have been ninety-seven years old at the time of Queen Anne's death, Prince Waldemar of Denmark would not have taken much, even on the most acute prevision of the most favourable circumstances, by engaging in a tontine speculation for the Prince Consortship of England."—*Saturday Review*, vol. vii. p. 102.

Mr. Malcolm Laing is of opinion that had the "Icon Basilike"* appeared a week sooner, it might have been the saving of Charles the First,—of his cause, and his life.

So many important events having nearly occurred, which, however, did not take place; and so many others having actually happened which may be traced to accident, and to individual character; it is Mr. Disraeli's justification of his proposed History of Events which have not happened, that we shall, by studies of this kind, "enlarge our conception of the nature of human events," and gather generally useful instruction in our historical reading.

A propos of one most curious question suggested by the siege of Jerusalem, namely, What was the effect of that event on the progress of Christianity? a thoughtful writer has observed, that it is sometimes permissible to indulge in the amusement of guessing at what would have been if the course of human history had gone otherwise than in fact it has. He considers, indeed, the amusement to be not only harmless, but to be possibly to some extent instructive,† since it serves to fix in the memory the

* Of which fifty editions are said to have run out within a year.

† Herein taking higher ground than Adam Smith in his apologetic prelude to a conjectural scheme of improved taxation, in the closing chapter of his great work. "Such a speculation can at worst be regarded but as a new Utopia, less amusing certainly, but not more useless and chimerical than the old one."—*Wealth of Nations*, book v. part iv. ch. iii.

true connexion of events. Suppose, then, with him, that Jerusalem had not been taken; what would have happened? If the Jews, he speculates, had been left to themselves, and had retained their own national organisation, they would probably have formed for several centuries an integral part, and a very rich, flourishing, and immensely populous part, of the Roman Empire. He thinks it hardly unnatural to suppose that they might even have outlived it, and have survived its fate. Then he goes on to say that the descendants of men who knew how to oppose Titus and his legions so manfully and with such a near approach to success, would very probably have been able to hold their own against the successors of Mahomet. "They might have formed a barrier by which the Mussulman might have been effectually restrained from going overland to Asia Minor, and ultimately to Constantinople; and if they had survived that danger, there is no reason why they should not have been living in Palestine as an independent people to this day."

Then comes the question, What, in such a case, according to mere human probabilities, would have been the result to Christianity? a question which the proposer justly calls a most curious one. And he thinks it hardly too much to say that, in such a case (the hypothesis, namely, of the Jews preserving a distinct national existence), Christianity could never, by any ordinary means, have

broken the rough shell of Judaism so completely as, in fact, it did.*

Only a week later the same Review, if not the same Reviewer, had occasion to handle Mr. Williams's plea for the Confederate States, and his argument that the evils of the old Constitution of the United States would have been obviated if the senior Senator for the time being had succeeded to the Presidency, not for four years, but for life. Whether under such a system as Mr. Williams advocates, the States could have continued a homogeneous nation, or rather an aggregate of nations like the German Confederation, is a question on which his Cisatlantic critic declines to pronounce—belonging as it does to "the region of the might-have-been, and this region is as unsatisfactory as it is tempting."

Tempting enough, *nobis saltem*, for further specimens from historians who are tempted into it. *Les voici*,—Froude, Stephen, Macaulay, Alison, Carlyle,

* "One of the great merits of Dr. Milman's writings is, that he has marked with appropriate clearness and vigour the fact that Christianity was at first a Jewish creed, that Jerusalem was its earliest centre, and that the difficulty felt, as we learn from the Acts, by St. Paul and St. Peter of enlarging its character continued long after the apostolic times—a fact which Dr. Milman illustrates by the circumstance that the author of the *Clementina* describes St. Paul as ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος—ἄνομον τινα καὶ φλυαρώδη. It is hard even to guess how much this difficulty would have been aggravated if the Jews had preserved a distinct national existence."—*Saturday Review*, XVI. 677; review of Lewin's Siege of Jerusalem by Titus.

and others,—each in a subjunctive mood of his own, and all in a concatenation accordingly.

If the Black Prince had lived, or if Richard II. had inherited the temper of the Plantagenets, the ecclesiastical system of this realm, Mr. Froude contends,* would have been spared what he calls the "misfortune of a longer reprieve." A complete measure of secularisation, confiscating the estates of the religious houses, was in favour with the House of Commons—and the historian considers that with an Edward III. on the throne such a measure would very likely have been executed, and the course of English history would have been changed.

Had Henry of Navarre, suggests a theological essayist, been succeeded by a prince equally magnanimous, and the Edict of Nantes been maintained as the basis of religious peace, no one can doubt that the whole course of European history would have assumed a different, and—according to all human estimate—a more visibly beneficent direction.

So Lord Macaulay suggests that if Elizabeth, while the division in the Protestant body was still recent, had been so wise as to abstain from requiring the observance of a few forms which a large part of her subjects considered as Popish, she might perhaps have averted those fearful calamities which, forty years after her death, afflicted the Church. And again, that had Leo the Tenth, when the exactions

* It is Richard *III.* in his pages. But of course the *second* Richard must be meant.

and impostures of the Pardoners first roused the indignation of Saxony, corrected those evil practices with a vigorous hand, it is not improbable that Luther would have died in the bosom of the Church of Rome.

Scattered through Lord Macaulay's writings may be found numerous illustrations of a similar indulgence in speculative surmise. If the Union accomplished in 1707 has been a great blessing both to England and Scotland, it is, he maintains, because, in constituting one State, it left two Churches. Had there been an amalgamation of the hierarchies, there would never, he asserts, have been an amalgamation of the nations; but successive Mitchells would have fired at successive Sharps; and five generations of Claverhouses would have butchered five generations of Camerons. "Those marvellous improvements which have changed the face of Scotland would never have been effected. Plains now rich with harvests would have remained barren moors. Waterfalls which now turn the wheels of immense factories would have resounded in a wilderness. New Lanark would still have been a sheep-walk, and Greenock a fishing hamlet."

Arguing, in another place, that we are, in a great measure, indebted for the civil and religious liberty which we enjoy to the pertinacity with which the High Church party, in the Convocation of 1689, refused even to deliberate on any plan of Comprehension, the same noble historian affirms that a reform, such as, in the days of Elizabeth, would have united

the great body of English Protestants, would, in the days of William, have alienated more hearts than it would have conciliated. If a non-juring layman's eyes and ears had been shocked by changes in the worship to which he was attached, "the tie which bound him to the Established Church would have been dissolved. He would have repaired to some non-juring assembly, where the service which he loved was performed without mutilation. The new sect, which as yet consisted almost exclusively of priests, would soon have been swelled by numerous and large congregations; and in those congregations would have been found a much greater proportion of the opulent, of the highly descended, and of the highly educated, than any other body of Dissenters could show." And Macaulay concludes that the Episcopal schism, thus reinforced, would probably have been as formidable to the new King and his successors as ever the Puritan schismatics had been to the princes of the House of Stuart.

But for the weakness of "that foolish Ishbosheth," Richard Cromwell, he elsewhere speculates, we might now be living under the government of his Highness Oliver the Fifth or Richard the Fourth, Protector, by the grace of God, of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions thereto belonging. "The form of the great founder of the dynasty, on horseback, as when he led the charge at Naseby, or on foot, as when he took the mace from the table of the Commons, would adorn our squares and overlook our public offices from

Charing Cross; and sermons in his praise would be duly preached on his lucky day, the third of September, by court-chaplains, guiltless of the abomination of the surplice." So too in another treatise, referring to Clarendon's complaint of the apathy of Continental powers, on the death of Charles the First and the abolition of the monarchy,—and insisting that this apathy was in reality of the greatest service to the royal cause, the essayist adds: "If a French or Spanish army had invaded England, and if that army had been cut to pieces, as we have no doubt it would have been on the first day when it came face to face with the soldiers of Preston and Dunbar, with Colonel Fight-the-good-fight, and Captain Smite-them-hip-and-thigh, the House of Cromwell would probably now have been reigning in England;"—a probability founded on the writer's persuasion that the nation would have forgotten all the misdeeds of the man who had cleared the soil of foreign invaders.

A somewhat parallel passage occurs to us in one of the political disquisitions of Samuel Taylor Coleridge; who expresses his entire conviction that if Charles the Second had been powerfully backed by the armies and resources of France, Spain, or the Empire, he would never have been received in England without *terms;* that the discussion of terms would have rekindled the disposition to political controversy; that a spirit of Republican enthusiasm, which only slumbered, would have been reawakened in the army; and that, instead of Charles the Second

on the throne, England would have seen General Monk on the scaffold.*

So again, but on the other side of the question, Hartley Coleridge—like his father versed in the annals of the Great Rebellion—surmises that had the royalists known how to make use of their victory at Atherton Moor (June 30, 1643), the North might have been secured to the King, the communication between the Scotch and English rebels cut off, and perhaps the House of Stewart would still be reigning over the British Isles.

It is in another biography in that gentle book with a blustering title, as Southey characterised his nephew's Biographia Borealis, that Hartley pronounces it an amusing, if not a very useful speculation, to imagine how certain persons *would* have acted and thought, under certain circumstances and opportunities, in which the said persons never happened to be placed. "We could, for instance, compose a long romance of the heroic actions which Anne Clifford *would* have performed in the civil war, had she been possessed of her broad lands and fenced castles. She *might* have made Skipton or Pendragon as famous as Lathom and Wardour." The elder Coleridge seems to have thought that Hartley had something like a weakness for the potential mood, when appending a foot-note to his son's remark upon Swift that, untruthfully and unreasonably as the

* "These are no mere speculations; they are facts of history."—Coleridge's Essays on His Own Times, vol. ii. p. 535.

Dean could write, he, "of all his contemporaries, *might* have been the greatest philosopher," S. T. C.'s protesting comment is, "That is if with equal genius he had *not* been Dean Swift, but almost the very contrary." There must be a limit to the irregularities of the most irregular verb—such as *might-have-been* may be taken to represent, in exceptional vagaries of mood and tense.

Sober enough was uncle Southey's historical speculation, in one of the most prosaic of his poems, on the fate of unborn ages that hung upon the fray, when, at Platæa, Greece united smote the Persian's power:

> For had the Persian triumph'd, then the spring
> Of knowledge from that living source had ceast;
> All would have fallen before the barbarous King,
> Art, Science, Freedom; the despotic East,
> Setting her mark upon the race subdued,
> Had stamp'd them in the mould of sensual servitude.

The battle of Marathon, even as an event in English history, is affirmed by Mr. J. S. Mill to be more important than the battle of Hastings: If the issue of that day—immortalising Miltiades—had been different, the Britons and the Saxons might still have been wandering in the woods.

That *belles lettres* of the lighter sort be not neglected in these "pregnant instances," from the most masterly and philosophical of current writers in political economy, turn to the most masterly of contemporary writers of realistic fiction. The abortive rebellion of 1715 sets Mr. Thackeray on a sally of

conjectural recreation. As one thinks of what might have been, says he, how amusing the speculation is. Relating how the doomed Scottish gentlemen came out at Lord Mar's summons, mounted the white cockade, that has been a flower of sad poetry ever since, and rallied round the ill-omened Stewart standard at Braemar, he holds that Mar, with 8,000 men, and but 1,500 opposed to him, might have driven the enemy over the Tweed, and taken possession of the whole of Scotland,—but that the Pretender's duke did not venture to move when the day was his own. Edinburgh Castle, it is further advanced, might have been in King James's hands; but that the men who were to escalade it stayed to drink his health at the tavern, and arrived two hours too late at the rendezvous under the castle wall. Suppose they had not stayed drinking—eighteen of them, "powdering their hair," as the facetious landlady said, for the attack on the castle. Then had Edinburgh Castle, and town, and all Scotland been King James's. "The north of England rises, and marches over Barnet Heath upon London. Wyndham is up in Somersetshire; Packington in Worcestershire; and Vivian in Cornwall. The Elector of Hanover, and his hideous mistresses, pack up the plate, and perhaps the crown jewels in London, and are off *viâ* Harwich and Helvoetsluys, for dear old Deutschland. The King—God save him!—lands at Dover with tumultuous applause; shouting multitudes, roaring cannon, the Duke of Marlborough weeping tears of joy, and all the

bishops kneeling in the mud. In a few years mass is said in Saint Paul's; matins and vespers are sung in York Minster; and Dr. Swift is turned out of his stall and deanery-house at St. Patrick's, to give place to Father Dominic, from Salamanca.

"All these changes were possible then, and once thirty years afterwards—all this we might have had, but for the *pulveris exigui jactu*, that little toss of powder for the hair which the Scottish conspirators stopped to take at the tavern."

One may apply to the subject of Mr. Thackeray's satirical speculation what a living French critic—by some considered the most eminent of living French critics—says of the *conspiration Malet* organised by De Retz against Richelieu: "Tout cela manqua, mais aurait pu réussir. Combien de grandes choses dans l'histoire ne tiennent qu'à un cheveu!" The *cheveu* is especially applicable in the case of those hair-powdering eighteen.

Napoleon used to declare at St. Helena, that if only his brothers had followed him with a will, together they would have made their way onwards and still onwards to the very poles. Everything would have been cast down before us; we should have changed the entire face of the earth." On the other hand an Orleanist critic, and apologist in this matter for one at least of Napoleon's brothers, the King of Holland, affirms, that had but the Emperor understood that brother's act of abdication, he need not, would not have died at St. Helena, that lonesome, dreary isle,

Placed far amid the melancholy main.

Historical would-have-beens, or might-have-beens, are of frequent occurrence among the ruminations of Sir Archibald Alison. Had America not been totally wanting in nomad tribes—to take one instance—the empires of New Granada and Peru, he says, would have been repeatedly overturned, like those of the Assyrians and Medes, by the arms of the shepherd kings. The energy of the desert, he affirms, would have been engrafted on the riches of civilisation; the feeble and debasing government of a false theocracy would have been supplanted by the energetic spirit of roving independence: and when the Spaniards appeared on their coasts, instead of a meek race, who tendered their necks to the yoke and their riches to the spoiler, the invaders would have encountered the lances of freemen, who would have equalled them in valour, and have speedily hurled them back into the waves.

Treating, again, of our wars with America and France, Sir Archibald decides that if Great Britain had put her naval and military forces on a proper footing during peace, and been ready, on the first breaking out of hostilities, to act with an energy worthy of her real strength: if she had possessed 50,000 disposable troops in 1775, and 100,000 in 1792, the American War might have been brought to a victorious termination in 1776, the French contest in 1793: "Six years of subsequent disastrous warfare in the first case, and twenty of glorious but costly hostilities in the second, would have been avoided; and the national debt, instead of eight hundred,

would now have been under two hundred millions sterling."

Another tense of Sir Archibald's subjunctive mood. Had the report of the Bullion Committee in 1811 been acted upon, and the resumption of cash payments been made compulsory, what would have been the result? Evident ruin to the Bank, according to Alison; bankruptcy to the government, and an abandonment of all the enterprises, vital to the state, in which the empire was engaged. Wellington, deprived of all his pecuniary resources in Spain, would, the historian is clear, have been compelled to withdraw from the Peninsula: in the mortal struggle between domestic insolvency and disaster abroad, all our foreign efforts must have been abandoned. "The crash in England would have come precisely at the crisis of the war; cash payments would have been resumed in May, 1813, just after the battle of Lutzen, and on the eve of the armistice of Prague; Napoleon, relieved from the pressure of Wellington's veterans, would have made head against the forces of the north;" while, as regards the forces of the north themselves and the allies at large, Austria, in such unpromising circumstances, would never have joined the coalition; Russia, exhausted and discouraged, would have retired to her forests; Germany, unsupported by British subsidies, would have remained dormant in the strife; and "the sun of European freedom would have sunk beneath the wave of Gallic ambition."

Elsewhere Sir Archibald pronounces it to be

"perhaps not going too far" to assert, that had a paper currency been found out, and brought into general use, at an earlier period, it "might have averted the fall of the Roman Empire." Almost equally characteristic of the learned author, not without a soupçon of Mr. Buckle infused, is the hypothetical query or challenge: "Had the Russians been located in Yorkshire, and the Anglo-Saxon on the banks of the Volga,—who will affirm that the character of the two nations, despite the all but indelible influence of race, would not have been exchanged?" But what, after all, avails this sort of query, or challenge? For, to apply certain lines of Mr. Tennyson's,

> —— while we breathe beneath the sun,
> The world which credits what is done
> Is cold to all that MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

Mr. Carlyle, although in at least one place he treats the speculation of historical *would-have-beens* as a vanity, indulges now and then in its conjectural hypotheses. The subjunctive, the optative mood, he once remarked, are vague moods: there is no tense one can found on but the preterite of the indicative. But when *he* is in the mood, the contingencies of the subjunctive are not without interest to him. As where he speculates on the difference it might have made to France, and through France to the world at large, had Mirabeau been differently brought up. Had the young Mirabeau had a father as other men have; or even no father at all! Consider him, in

that case, rising by natural gradation, by the rank, the opportunity, the irrepressible buoyant faculties he had, step after step, to official place—to the chief official place; as, in a time when Turgots, Neckers, and men of ability, were grown indispensable, Mr. Carlyle considers him sure to have done. "There would then have been at the summit of France the one French Man who could have grappled with that great Question; who, yielding and refusing, managing, guiding, and, in short, *seeing* and daring what was to be done, had perhaps saved France her Revolution; remaking her by peaceabler methods! But to the Supreme Powers it seemed not so." Or again, as where he conjectures the effect of a bolder and defiant demeanour of Lewis the Sixteenth when detained at Varennes, on the occasion of the Royal Family's attempted flight in June, 1791. What if the King had dared the Drouet set to detain him—had told them that he would not be taken alive—had called on the body-guards to support him, and on the postilions to start again at once? The historian fancies in that case the pale paralysis of those two Le Blanc musketeers; the drooping of Drouet's under-jaw; and Lewis faring on; in some few steps awakening relays and hussars; triumphant entry into Montmédi; and the whole course of French History different. And later in the narrative he asks, why were not Drouet and Procureur Sausse in their beds, that unblessed Varennes night? Why did they not let the Korff Berline go whither it listed? "Nameless incoherency, incompatibility,

perhaps prodigies at which the world still shudders, had been spared." Or again, as where, in his latest and most elaborate history, Mr. Carlyle refers to the rumour circulated in Germany in 1730, that the Prince-Royal of Prussia was to have one of the Imperial Archduchesses, perhaps Maria Theresa herself. "Which might indeed have saved immensities of trouble to the whole world as well as to the Pair in question, and have made a very different History for Germany and the rest of us. Fancy it!"

Fancy it, he bids us. Nevertheless had he, long years before, exposed the futility of such fancies; warning us that "these same *would-have-beens* [the italics his own] are mostly a vanity;" and that "the World's History could never in the least be what it would, or might, or should, by any manner of potentiality, but simply and altogether what it *is*." In which summary sentence Mr. Carlyle sufficiently disposes, to all practical purposes, of historical might, could, would, or should-have-beens.

As Wallenstein says, in the tragic sequel of Schiller's triology,

> ——Might or might not
> Is now an idle question.

Or, to apply a remark of Professor Moir's, in a case of purely conjectural criticism, "In such calculations of probability, we can only use Sebastian's words—'What *had been* is unknown; what *is*, appears.'" Or again, the style of Mr. Browning's subtly suggestive apologist:

——But, friend,
We speak of what is—not of what might-be,
And how 'twere better if 'twere otherwise.

Mais laissons les suppositions sans but précis et sans solution possible.

"Still," mutters Some One, "still it might have chanced."
"Might!" quoth Crabbe's Hero, "who is so exact
As to inquire what MIGHT HAVE BEEN a fact?"

THE UNWELCOME NEWS-BRINGER.

A Cue from Shakspeare.

GOOD and trusty fellow, and attached follower of Northumberland's, as Morton is, Northumberland shrinks from that man's presence, and avoids the sound of his voice, from the hour he brought the earl tidings of Harry Percy's death. For,

> ——the first bringer of unwelcome news
> Hath but a losing office; and his tongue
> Sounds ever after as a sullen bell,
> Remember'd knolling a departing friend.

Well may Rosse deprecate the antipathy of Macduff, when breaking to him the bitter bad news of his massacred household:

> Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
> Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
> That ever yet they heard.

Salisbury finds a worse than ungracious reception from the noble Lady Constance, when he brings her word of adverse events. Proud peer and loyal soldier though she knows him to be, she cannot control a passionate outburst of personal aversion, of the

instant born, and at the spur of the moment expressed—

> Fellow, begone; I cannot brook thy sight;
> This news hath made thee a most ugly man.
> *Sal.* What other harm have I, good lady, done,
> But spoke the harm that is by others done?
> *Const.* Which harm within itself so heinous is,
> As it makes harmful all that speak of it.

Lewis the Dauphin's reception of a messenger of disaster in the same play, is, "Ah, foul shrewd news! —Beshrew thy very heart!" Richard the Second's gentle queen becomes a very shrew in her onset on the gardener that reports her husband's fall:

> ——How dares
> Thy harsh-rude tongue sound this unpleasing news?
> * * * Say, where, when, and how,
> Cam'st thou by these ill-tidings? speak, thou wretch.

Vain is the poor bullied gardener's "Pardon me, madam; little joy have I to breathe this news:" he but brings upon himself this comminatory rhyme without reason,

> Gardener, for telling me this news of woe,
> I would the plants thou graft'st may never grow.

So with Juliet turning on the Nurse and her black intelligence: "What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus?" "O pardon me for bringing these ill news," is Balthasar's deprecating appeal to Romeo, when acquainting him with Juliet's death.— Indeed, Shakspeare abounds in illustrations of this topic—the unthankful office of the unwelcome news-bringer; other and diversified examples of which will occur farther on.

Adam Smith's chapter on Merit and Demerit contains some remarks on the tendency of the agreeable or disagreeable effects of an action to throw a shadow of merit or demerit upon the agent, though in his intentions there be nothing deserving praise or blame, or at least that deserves them in the degree in which we are apt to bestow them. "Thus, even the messenger of bad news is disagreeable to us," just as, on the contrary, we feel a sort of gratitude to the man who brings us good tidings: for a moment we look upon them both as the authors, the one of our good, the other of our bad fortune, and regard them in some measure as if they had really brought about the events which they only give an account of. As the first author of our joy is naturally the object of a transitory gratitude, so the first author of our sorrow is just as naturally the object of a (not always) transitory resentment.*

Sydney Smith, again, in one of his lectures on Moral Philosophy, expatiates on the same theme

* "Tigranes, King of Armenia, struck off the head of the man who brought him the first account of the approach of a formidable enemy. To punish in this manner the author of bad tidings, seems barbarous and inhuman: yet to reward the messenger of good news is not disagreeable to us; we think it suitable to the bounty of kings. But why do we make this difference, since, if there is no fault in the one, neither is there any merit in the other? It is because any sort of reason seems sufficient to authorise the exertion of the social and benevolent affections; but it requires the most solid and substantial to make us enter into that of the unsocial and malevolent."—Adam Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments, part ii. sect. iii.

—evidently fresh from the study of Father Adam. The messenger of good news, he says, is always an object of benevolence; every one knows that an officer who brings home the news of a victory, receives a donation in money, and is commonly knighted or promoted. Strictly speaking, it would be just as equitable, the lecturer affirms, to mulct him of half a year's pay for bringing home the news of a defeat, as to present him with £500 for bringing home the news of a victory; but, if they be not *too* great, all men sympathise with the excesses of the generous and benevolent passions; while they restrain the malevolent principles within the most rigid bounds of justice. "That the messenger of disastrous news should be punished would appear to the impartial spectator the most horrible injustice; but no one envies his reward to him who brings good intelligence, though no one pretends to say that he has deserved it."

Deserved it, quotha? Use every man after his desert, as Hamlet says, and who shall 'scape whipping? Which is about the only consolation, as regards Merit and Demerit, that can be suggested to or for such bringers of unwelcome news as have been whipped, or otherwise evil entreated, by those to whom they were sent.

Pope considers that the speech of Antilochus, when breaking to Achilles the fatal news of his friend's death, ought to serve as a model for the brevity with which so dreadful a piece of news should be delivered.

> Sad tidings, son of Peleus! thou must hear,
> And wretched I, th' unwilling messenger!
> Dead is Patroclus! For his corse they fight,
> His naked corse; his arms are Hector's right.

For, in great distresses, argues the translator-critic, after Eustathius, there is nothing more ridiculous than a messenger who begins a long story with pathetic descriptions; he speaks without being heard; for the person to whom he addresses himself has no time to attend to him: the first word which discovers to him his misfortune, has made him deaf to all the rest. And, it may be added, has made the messenger hateful in his sight, and the messenger's accents cruel discord in his ears.

Reason good have the slaves who inform Gamelyn, in Chaucer, of his brother's active antagonism,—to deprecate their lord's fury:

> Whan they had him founde, on knees they hem sette,
> And adoun with here hood, and here lord grette:
> 'Sire, wraththe you nought, for the good roode,
> For we have brought you tydynges, but they be nat goode.

A man of Gamelyn's violent temper might be expected to wreak his vengeance on the slave who brought him evil tidings, observes one of the poet's annotators; and adds, "This is a feeling by no means peculiar to the middle ages."

When the old king, Muley Aben Hassan, was roused at midnight in the Alhambra, by the news that Boabdil had surprised the city, in the first transports of his rage, says Washington Irving, he would have struck the messenger to the earth.

A dukedom had been intended for Lord Darnley; but the higher title was suspended, and news reached him in May, 1565, that on the 15th, he, the Queen of Scots' betrothed, was to be created Earl of Ross, at Stirling; and "the foolish boy struck with his dagger at the justice-clerk who was sent to tell him of the unwelcome change."

One is rather gratified than grieved, somehow, at the smiting and smashing that "spiteful fop" receives, in the Story of Rimini,—as the guerdon for his malign haste to inform Prince Giovanni of the faithlessness of wife and brother:

> Pale first, then red, his eyes upon the stretch,
> Then deadly white, the husband heard the wretch,
> Who in soft terms, almost with lurking smile,
> Ran on, expressing his "regret" the while.
> The husband, prince, cripple, and brother heard;
> Then seem'd astonished at the man,—then stirr'd
> His tongue but could not speak; then dash'd aside
> His chair as he arose, and loudly cried,
> "Liar and Madman! . . . . . .
> Regorge the filth in thy detested throat."—
> And at the word, with his huge fist he smote
> Like iron at the place, then seized him all,
> And dash'd in swoon against the bleeding wall.

In his account of the advance of Lucullus against Tigranes—that self-styled king of kings, upon whom four kings waited daily as running footmen (in short jerkins too), and whose inordinate pride was a world's wonder,—Plutarch drily enough relates, that as Tigranes ordered the first man who brought him news of the enemy's arrival, to lose his head for his reward,

no one afterwards presumed to mention it. Lucullus, indeed! the Armenians might thenceforward sing or say,—oh, no, we never mention *him:* his name is never heard.

Mr. Carlyle describes Kaiser Wenzel (A.D. 1378), whose eminent talent lay less in governing the Holy Roman Empire, poor soul, than in "drinking beer, and dancing with the girls,"—and indeed he broke pots, if not hearts, to a ruinous extent—as being killed at second-hand, as it were, by terrible Zisca; though the direct cause of death was apoplexy, or sudden spasm of the heart. "For Zisca, stout and furious, blind of one eye and at last of both, a kind of human rhinoceros driven mad, . . . was tearing up the world at a huge rate. Rhinoceros Zisca was on the Weissenberg, or a still nearer Hill of Prag, since called *Zisca-Berg* (Zisca Hill); and none durst whisper it to the King. A servant waiting at dinner inadvertently let slip the word. 'Zisca there? Deny it, slave!' cried Wenzel, frantic. Slave durst not deny. Wenzel drew his sword to run at him, but fell down dead: that was the last pot broken by Wenzel."—*Liar and slave!* with a furious blow to match the words, is Macbeth's greeting of the messenger that reports a seeming advance of Birnam wood towards Dunsinane. So King Richard the Third stops short a third messenger, whom he hotly assumes to bring as bad news as the two just dismissed,—with a blow, and the wrathful query, "Out, out, ye owls! nothing but songs of death?" So with Cleopatra and the envoy, whose ill news (Antony married to Octavia) she gathers from his face:

"I have a mind to strike thee ere thou speak'st;

and though she restrains herself from doing that, no sooner *has* he spoken than she strikes him down, strikes him again, and hales him up and down, with a running accompaniment to the tune of "Hence,

Horrible villain! or I'll spurn thine eyes
Like balls before me; I'll unhair thy head;
Thou shalt be whipp'd with wire, and stew'd in brine,
Smarting in ling'ring pickle.
Messenger. Gracious madam,
I that do bring the news, made not the match!
* * * * *
Cleop. Rogue, thou hast lived too long. [*Draws a dagger.*
Mess. Nay, then I'll run:
What mean you, madam? I have made no fault. [*Exit.*
Char. Good madam, keep yourself within yourself,
The man is innocent.
Cleop. Some innocents 'scape not the thunderbolt."

Small marvel is it that when the raving princess calls for the man again, to question him anew, "he is afeard to come," despite Cleopatra's assurance that though she is mad, she will not bite him.

When the news reached Galerius of Constantine's election to the imperial purple, in his dead father's room, we are told that the greedy emperor of the east was overcome by surprise, disappointment, and rage; and that, in Gibbon's words, "as he could seldom restrain his passions, he loudly threatened that he would commit to the flames both the letter and the messenger." Happily, Galerius thought better of it before the burning began. But, of a truth, the messenger was in peril by fire that day.

Such, we are told, was the terror produced by the vehemence of Napoleon's temper, in his later years, that "few had the moral courage necessary to withstand the ebullition consequent on the disclosure of unexpected and unpleasant truths."

Poor Mr. Pepys! Grateful readers of his precious Diary may afford him dues of commiseration for the black looks and sharp words he encountered, for no fault of his, from my Lord Ashly,—simply for delivering the King's commands: my Lord being "angry much thereat, and I am sorry it fell to me to carry the order." Our Samuel liked not such losing office. He was snubbed as though he had made the obnoxious order, and not merely carried it. Which did vex him. When tetchy and tumultuous Squire Western orders Miss Sophia to be called into the room to accept Mr. Blifil, and the young lady *non est inventa,* Fielding apostrophises Shakspeare and Hogarth to help him out in depicting the ill-news-bringer's mien and aspect. "O Shakespeare, had I thy pen! O Hogarth, had I thy pencil! then would I draw the picture of the poor serving-man, who, with pale countenance, staring eyes, chattering teeth, faltering tongue, and trembling limbs, entered the room and declared—that Madam Sophia was not to be found."* So, in Mr. Thackeray's Novel without a Hero, old Miss Crawley vents on her informant, poor Miss Briggs,* the wrath she feels at hear-

* "Rawdon married—Rebecca—governess—nobod—Get out of my house [to Miss Briggs], you fool—you idiot—you stupid old Briggs—how dare you?" &c. &c.—Vanity Fair, ch. xvi.

ing of her nephew's runaway match with Becky Sharpe.

Lovelace abounds with menaces against the possible messenger that shall come to him with tidings of Clarissa's death. "Woe be to either of the wretches who shall bring me the fatal news that she is no more! For it is but too likely that a shrick-owl so hated will never hoot or scream again; unless the shock, that will probably disorder my whole frame on so sad an occasion, by unsteadying my hand, shall divert my aim from his head or heart, if it turn not against my own." Another day it is, "I must after my messenger. I have told the varlet I will meet him . . . .; and I trust not myself with pistols, not only on his account, but my own." And so again when Harry bears the fatal news to Harlowe Place, the very "servants seemed more inclined to execrate than welcome him," and lifted their voices in one confused chorus of aversion and dismay.

Emile's guide, philosopher, and friend, goes one morning into Emile's room, a letter in his hand, and looking fixedly at the young lover, asks him, "What would you do were you told that Sophie is dead?" Emile utters a wild cry, strikes his hands together, and, without breathing a single word, gazes on his questioner with a bewildered stare. "Give me an answer," rejoins the other, in the same cool style. Whereupon, exasperated at the interrogator's *sang-froid*, Emile draws nearer to him, with eyes a-flame with wrath, and stopping all at once, exclaims, in an attitude almost menacing: "What I would do? . .

That I can't say. But this I know, that never in all my life would I set eyes again on him that should have brought me that news."

The Swedish Captain, from whom Thekla hears of Max Piccolomini's fate, might well surmise, on that ground alone,

> ——I fear you hate my presence,
> For my tongue spake a melancholy word.

So, too, Antiochus, in Racine, shrinks from a share in the task of acquainting Bérénice with her abandonment by Titus, and thus of incurring her undying hatred:

> Non, ne la voyons point, respectons sa douleur:
> Assez d'autres viendront lui conter son malheur.
> * * * *
> Encore un coup, fuyons; et par cette nouvelle
> N'allons point nous charger d'une haine immortelle.

In a like spirit, Eliduke, in one of Mr. Roscoe's tragedies, shifts on Walter the commission of announcing Blanchespee's death:

> *Walt.* But if you follow me so close, my lord,
> What need of my announcement?
> *Elid.* 'Tis my will,
> Which do, and do not dally. I'll not play
> The raven to go home and croak this news
> Into his sister's ears.
> *Walt.* You play the tyrant
> To make me do it, then. Well, sir, I'll go.

So with the discovery of the corpse of Francis Norton, in Wordsworth's poem,—and the reluctance

of those who knew and loved both him and his sister, to convey the black intelligence to her, already so desolate:

> But, on the third day, passing by
> One of the Norton tenantry
> Espied the uncovered corse; the man
> Shrank as he recognised the face,
> And to the nearest homesteads ran
> And called the people to the place.
> —How desolate is Rylstone Hall!
> This was the instant thought of all;
> And if the lonely Lady there
> Should be; to her they cannot bear
> This weight of anguish and despair.

Edifying as a historical comment on the losing errand of an ill-news-bringer, is the reception Macaulay relates of the mounted guardsman, who, in 1695, spurred through the City streets, announcing that King William had been killed. "Some apprentices, zealous for the Revolution and the Protestant religion, knocked him down and carried him to Newgate."

Or again, hark, with Carlyle, in the sultry days of a Paris July, in the troublous times opened by 1789, to "a human voice reporting articulately the Job's-news: *Necker, People's Minister, Saviour of France, is dismissed.* Impossible; incredible! Treasonous to the public peace! Such a voice ought to be choked in the water-works!—had not the news-bringer quickly fled." So in old Rome—"Go see, this rumourer whipped," is the tribune's order, as

regards the bringer of bad news about Coriolanus; and in spite of the rational remonstrance of shrewd old Menenius, that they should question the fellow before they punish him, lest they should chance to whip their information, and beat the messenger who bids beware of what is to be dreaded,—in spite of all such considerations, the popular voice is for whipping the man forthwith; and "Go whip him 'fore the people's eyes," is the other tribune's peremptory charge.

When the Prince of Orange and his army forded the Meuse in October, 1568, the Spaniards, startled by so bold an achievement, began to tremble, says Mr. Motley, at the prowess of a Prince whom they had affected to despise. "The very fact of the passage was flatly contradicted. An unfortunate burgher at Amsterdam was scourged at the whipping-post because he mentioned it as a matter of common report."

Plutarch tells us of a stranger, just landed in the Piræus, who, as he sat to be shaved in a barber's shop, spoke of the destruction of the Athenian fleet and army, in Sicily, as an event already known in Athens. The barber no sooner heard it than he rushed into the city, and blurted out the overwhelming news before the magistrates in open court. Dismay thrilled the assembly. The magistrates, however, summoned a meeting, and introduced the informant; who, being cross-examined, and unprepared with details, was voted a forger of false news and a public incendiary. In which

character he was fastened to the wheel, and bore the torture until the arrival of corroborative proof.

And yet, despite the penalties and the weight of odium incurred, how eager many are to be the conveyancers of ill news—to be the first to announce a calamity beyond the common—to have the first telling of an even distracting disaster. Gustav Freytag, in the most popular of his works, relates how "Herr Braun, the agent, rushed in breathless, *and with that secret satisfaction always felt by the bearer of bad news*, told how the whole of Poland and Galicia were in a blaze of insurrection."

Sir Walter Scott observes in his Diary, from personal experience, that servants are fond of the doleful, it gives such consequence to the person who communicates bad news.

It was the red-hot haste of a domestic to inform Charles VII. of a disaster to his arms, in 1745, that more or less directly cost that Emperor his life.* Query, whether a foreknowledge of such a result would have availed to counterbalance, in that glib serving-man, the dear delight of upsetting "master" with shocking bad news.

Mrs. Beecher Stowe illustrates this dear delight, in the case of the little niggers on Mr. Shelby's estate, who are all burning to tell massa of the

* He was laid up with gout at the time; and "this sudden communication of a disastrous event affecting the sensitive mind of the unfortunate monarch, the disorder remounted to his stomach, and proved fatal."—Coxe, Hist. of the House of Austria, vol. iii. ch. cvi.

slave-girl's flitting. "Very soon about a dozen young imps were roosting, like so many crows, on the verandah railings, each one determined to be the first one to apprise the strange 'mas'r of his ill luck."*

So far is human nature unrefined, black or white, from entering into Fanny Burney's tremulous dread of carrying unfavourable intelligence to her august mistress: "I can hardly, when my narration is bad, get out the words to tell it; and I come upon the worst parts, if of a nature to be indispensably told, with as much difficulty as if I had been author of them."

The desire of communicating knowledge or intelligence, remarks Henry Mackenzie, is an argument with those who hold that man is naturally a social animal. It is indeed one of the earliest propensities we discover; but with Mackenzie we may doubt whether the pleasure (for pleasure there cer-

* "'He'll be rael mad, I'll be bound,' said Andy.—'*Won't* he swar!' said little black Jake.—'Yes, for he *does* swar,' said woolly-headed Mandy. . . . . When at last, Haley appeared, booted and spurred, he was saluted with the bad tidings on every hand. The young imps on the verandah were not disappointed in their hope of hearing him 'swar,' which he did with a fluency and fervency which delighted them all amazingly, as they ducked and dodged hither and thither to be out of the reach of his riding-whip; and all whooping off together, they tumbled, in a pile of immeasurable giggle, on the withered turf under the verandah, where they kicked up their heels and shouted to their full satisfaction."—Uncle Tom's Cabin, ch. vi.

tainly is) arising from it, be not often more selfish than social; for we frequently observe the tidings of ill communicated quite as eagerly as those of good.*

It is not one of coarsely tempered and common clay that Mr. Disraeli makes so emotionally reluctant to bear to widow and orphan the news that they *are* widow and orphan. "He [George Cadurcis] lurked about the ravine for nearly three hours before he could summon up heart for the awful interview. . . . At length, in a paroxysm of energetic despair, he rushed forward, met them instantly, and confessed with a whirling brain, and almost unconscious of his utterance, that they could not hope to see again in this world" the two beloved ones, in whose characters and fate the author designed, more daringly than successfully, to portray those of Byron and Shelley.

All that is associated with the delivery of such tidings becomes memorably painful to the listener; the very

> ——creaking of the door, years past,
> Which let upon you such disabling news
> You ever after have been graver.

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* "Is it that we delight in observing the effects of the stronger passions? for we are all philosophers in this respect; and it is perhaps amongst the spectators of Tyburn that the most genuine are to be found."—Mackenzie, The Man of Feeling, ch. xl.

And yet this author was hardly a "sensation" novel-writer; nor is it to be supposed that he would pronounce those who, now-a-days, are mad for sensation dramas, the most genuine philosophers of the play-going class.

So, when Vidal tortures the Constable de Lacy by detailing to him the report of his bride's and nephew's disloyalty,—and the Constable's faithful adherent longs to strike Vidal to the earth. "Vidal," he cried, "thou art a——" "A bearer of bad tidings," said Vidal, interrupting him, "therefore subject to the misconstruction of every fool who cannot distinguish between the author of harm, and him who unwillingly reports it."

We read in Plato, that when the messenger from the eleven magistrates came in to the prison to Socrates, he said, as he stood near the old man eloquent: "I do not perceive that in you, Socrates, which I have taken notice of in others; I mean that they are angry with me, and curse me, when, being compelled by the magistrates, I announce to them that they must drink the poison." Having up to the present time found Socrates to be the most "generous, mild, and best of all the men who ever came into this place," the *nuncius* adds, not deprecatingly but confidently, "I am now well convinced that you are not angry with me, but with the authors of your present condition." The man burst into tears as he went out, turning away his face. The son of Sophroniscus retained his benignant calm.

The nature of bad news infects the teller, says the hesitating messenger, from whom Antony demands to know the worst, and who is fearful of what a knowledge of that worst may, from so hot a spirit as Antony's, bring upon himself, the teller of it. Antony admits the alleged infection, "only when it

concerns the fool, or coward." But at a drearier crisis in the infatuated triumvir's career, when Mardian comes as messenger to declare Cleopatra dead, that nuncius is dismissed with the significant assurance,

> ——That thou depart'st hence safe,
> Does pay thy labours richly. Go!

On the most prudential principles of self-preservation does another Shakspearian messenger, who has an ugly message from France to deliver to King Edward IV., preface his exposition of it by bargaining for a preliminary guarantee of personal immunity; the "few words" he has to announce being such, he says, "as I, without your special pardon, dare not relate." Pisanio's reluctance to break to Imogen the ruthless designs of her deluded lord, is most naturally and effectively suggested. With lingering steps and slow, Lodovico winds up the tragedy of the Moor of Venice by undertaking the narration of it to the senate:

> Myself will straight aboard; and, to the state
> This heavy act with heavy heart relate.

So Messala, when starting to convey to Brutus the story of where and how Cassius fell:

> ——I go to meet
> The noble Brutus, thrusting this report
> Into his ears; I may say, thrusting it;
> For piercing steel, and darts envenomèd,
> Shall be as welcome to the ears of Brutus,
> As tidings of this sight.

So too, but with yet more strenuous emphasis,

and in an effusion of wilder, stronger feeling, the cry of Troilus when the noblest of Priam's sons is slain in the field, and the thought, Who shall tell Priam of it? is fraught with perplexity and woe:

> ——Hector is gone!
> Who shall tell Priam so, or Hecuba?
> Let him that will a screech-owl aye be call'd,
> Go into Troy, and say there—Hector's dead!

BRUTISH AFFINITIES OF THE HUMAN FACE DIVINE.

EVERY man with an eye in his head must, in the course of his life, have observed in the physiognomies of kinsfolk, acquaintance, and strangers, so many and diverse analogies of expression, and graduated affinities of aspect, to the animal world, that, to adapt Butler's couplet,

> Just as on land there is no beast
> But in some fish at sea's expressed,

so, neither among the beasts of the field, nor the fishes of the sea, nor the fowls of the air, is there a single one, probably, that may not be more or less closely matched in characteristic features, or general aspect, by the facial traits of some one or other of the sons and daughters of men.

John Gay reminds us how ingeniously

> Sagacious Porta's skill could trace
> Some beast or bird in every face.
> The head, the eye, the nose's shape,
> Proved this an owl, and that an ape;
> When, in the sketches thus design'd,
> Resemblance brings some friend to mind,

You show the piece, and give the hint,
And find each feature in the print;
So monstrous like the portrait's found,
All know it, and the laugh goes round.

A parallel passage to which might be cited from Swift's Character of the Legion Club,—where Hogarth is apostrophised and his name defrauded (as was not uncommon) of a letter (if, at least, *h* be a letter, which Cockaigne and kindred realms might, and practically do, deny):

How I want thee, humourous Hogart!
Thou, I hear, a pleasant rogue art.
Were but you and I acquainted,
Every monster should be painted:
You should try your graving tools
On this odious group of fools;
Draw the *beasts* as I describe them:
Form their features while I gibe them;
Draw them like; for I assure you
You will need no *car'catura;*
Draw them so that we may trace
All the soul in every face.

And one might almost find a ready-made illustration of these verses in the extravaganza scene of a German boozing party of barons bold, introduced into "Vivian Grey,"—when that hero is interrupted in his speech, deprecating compulsion in drink, by the uproar of the bestial crew,—each of whose several peculiarities of brutish affinity comes out in high relief, on the principle apparently of *in vino veritas.* "To Vivian, stopped short in his oration, it seems as though a well-stocked menagerie had been

suddenly emptied in the room—such roaring and such growling, and such hissing, could only have been exceeded on some grand feast day in the recesses of a Brazilian forest. Asmanshausen looked as fierce as a boa-constrictor before dinner. The proboscis of the Grand-Duke heaved to and fro like the trunk of an enraged elephant. Hockheimer glared like a Bengal tiger, about to spring on its prey. Steinberg growled like a Baltic bear. In Markbrunnen, Vivian recognised the wild-boar he had himself often hunted. Grafenberg brayed like a jackass; and Geisenheim chattered like an ape. But all was forgotten and unnoticed when Vivian heard the fell and frantic shouts of the laughing hyæna, the Margrave of Rudesheimer." Nay, one man may in his time play many parts, combine many natures, of the brute brute-like, according to the Shakspearean philosophy. For, what is it Alexander tells Cressida of Ajax? "This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions; he is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant; a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours, that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion." Or to adopt for the nonce the phrenological crotchet of Mr. Cranium: The human brain consists of a bundle or compound of all the faculties of all other animals; and from the greater development of one or more of these, in the infinite varieties of combination, result all the peculiarities of individual character.*

* See, *in extenso*, Mr. Cranium's Lecture, in chap. xii. of

It is part, therefore, of this lecturer's practical application of his subject, to advise every parent, who has the welfare of his son at heart, to procure as extensive a collection as possible of the skulls of animals, and, before determining on the choice of a profession, to compare with the utmost nicety their bumps and protuberances with those of the skull of his son. If the development of the organ of destruction point out a similarity between the youth and the tiger, let him be brought to some profession (whether that of a butcher, a soldier, or a physician, may be regulated by circumstances) in which he may be furnished with a license to kill: as, without such license, the indulgence of his natural propensities may lead to the untimely rescission of his vital thread, "with edge of penny cord and vile reproach." If he show an analogy with the jackal, let all possible influence be used to procure him a place at court, where he will infallibly thrive.* If his skull bear a marked resemblance to that of a magpie, it cannot be doubted that he will prove an admirable lawyer; and if with this advantageous conformation be combined any similitude to that of an owl, very confident hopes may be formed of his becoming a judge. For, in due proportion to his proximity of

"Headlong Hall," which led off the series of Mr. Peacock's satirical fictions, each of them written with a purpose, and certainly with point.

* Mr. Peacock wrote when George the Fourth was king. Not so would he have written of the court of Victoria—even granting him an enemy to all courts.

likeness to that sage-looking fowl, will be his approximation to Lord Chancellor Thurlow's success—of whom, for the infinite abysm of beetle-browed wisdom indicated by his aspect, it was said in malice or in despair, that no man, by any possibility, ever could *be* so wise as Thurlow *looked*.

Thurlow's schoolfellow and friend, the gentle poet Cowper, in one of his few extant essays in prose, amuses himself, if not his readers, with some fancies on certain affinities between human natures and brutish. Thus, for instance, says he, the affinity between chatterers and monkeys, and praters and parrots, is too obvious not to occur at once; grunters and growlers may be justly compared to hogs; snarlers are curs; and the *spitfire passionate* are a sort of wild-cats, that will not bear stroking, but will purr when they are pleased. Complainers are screech-owls; and story-tellers, always repeating the same dull note, are cuckoos. Poets that prick up their ears at their own hideous braying are no better than asses; critics in general are venomous serpents that delight in hissing; and some of them, who have got together a few technical terms, without knowing their meaning, are no other than magpies.

It is part of Mr. Kingsley's teaching, that man is the microcosm, and that, as the highest animal, the ideal type of the mammalia, he, like all true types, comprises in himself the attributes of all lower species. "Therefore he must have a tiger-vein in him, my dear Claude, as well as a beaver-vein and a spider-vein; and no more shame to him. You are a

butterfly; that good fellow [who has just "wantonly" knocked over a seal] a beast of prey; both may have their own work to do in this age just as they had in the old ones; and if you do not like that explanation, all I can say is, I can sympathise with you and with him too. Homo sum—nil humani à me alienum puto."

Judge Haliburton indulges in an excursus (making use of his excursion or "season-ticket" for that purpose) on the characteristic resemblance of lawyers to cats. They purr round you, he says (or rather, being himself one of the profession, he makes an imaginary interlocutor say), and rub against you coaxingly when they want you to overcome your prejudice against their feline tribe. They play before they pounce. "How they fix their eyes and glare at their victim, just before they finally spring upon him! They have long claws, and sharp, powerful nippers, and no one ever escapes from their clutches. Like cats, too, their attachment is local and not personal; they are fond of your mansion and estate, but not of you, and when you leave them, they remain in possession." The "mousing man, who bore the name of Marks," in Mrs. Stowe's great-sensation novel, is described as short and slender, "lithe and cat-like in his motions," with a "peering mousing expression about his keen black eyes, with which every feature of his face seemed sharpened into sympathy." Poking his head forward, his wont is to look shrewdly at people, "as a

cat sometimes looks at a moving dry leaf," or other possible object of pursuit.

As another illustration of these analogics in interpretation of character, take Mr. Carlyle's description of old Auchinleck, James Boswell's father, as having, if not the "gay, tail-spreading, peacock vanity of his son," no little of the "slow-stalking, contentious, hissing vanity of the gander; a still more fatal species."

We may apply to the general subject what Swift, in the original, designs for a question of names, but which the author of "Gulliver" would be the last to object to our making a question of natures.

> As mastiff dogs, in modern phrase, are
> Call'd Pompey, Scipio, and Cæsar;
> As pies and daws are often styled
> With christian nicknames, like a child;
> As we say Monsieur to an ape,
> Without offence to human shape;
> So men have got from bird and brute
> Names that would best their nature suit.
> The Lion, Eagle, Fox, and Boar,
> Were heroes' titles heretofore,
> Bestow'd as hieroglyphics fit
> To show their valour, strength, or wit.

They say every man has his likeness among the lower animals, observes a Quarterly Reviewer of the Zoological Gardens,—adding, "And we have seen plenty of adjutants* waiting on a winter's night for

* "See yonder, on the very edge of the pool, the gaunt adjutant, his head muffled up in his shoulders, looking like some traveller attempting to keep his nose warm in the east wind.

the last omnibus." Referring, again, to Mr. Rogers's remark, that visiting the monkeys was like going to see one's poor relations, the same writer points, among these "wondrous shabby old fellows," to one large, long-haired, black-faced rascal, who looks as murderous as a Malay—to another with great bushy whiskers and shaggy eyebrows (the mona), as "the very picture of a successful horsedealer;" and to a third, who, with his long nose and keen eye, "has all the air of a crafty old lawyer." The contemplation of them brings involuntarily to Dr. Wynter's mind the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

But that is Dr. Dove's department,—*the* DOCTOR'S,—Southey's at least. For it was the notion of that right excellent Daniel of Doncaster, that the Archeus, or living principle, has passed through a long progression in the lower world, before it becomes capable of being united to a rational and immortal soul in the human body;—and he persuaded himself, accordingly, that he could discover in particular individuals indications of the line by which their Archeus had travelled through the vegetable and animal kingdoms. For instance, there was a little pragmatical exciseman, with a hungry face, sharp nose, red eyes, and thin coarse straggling

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. . What an elegant gentleman seems the Stanley crane beside him! There is as much difference between the two as between a young guardsman in full dress at the opera, and the night cabman huddled up in the multitudinous capes of his great-coat." —WYNTER, *Curiosities of Civilization*, pp. 107-8, 3rd edit.

hair of a yellow cast (what was formerly called Judas-colour), whom he pronounced to have been a ferret in his last stage. In a certain lawyer he distinctly recognised a fox, "the vulpine character being manifestly retained in his countenance." He convicted an old Major in the West York Militia of having been a turkey-cock; and all who knew the Major were satisfied of the likeness, whatever they might be of the theory. "One of the neighbouring justices was a large, square-built, heavy person, with a huge head, a wide mouth, little eyes, and a slender proportion of intellect. Him he set down for a hippopotamus." How Doctor Dove further detected a goose in another magistrate,—in other acquaintances a duck, a pig, a mole, a rabbit, and the dog in all its varieties,—those who list may find, in one of the intercalary chapters, by the hundred, of Southey's voluminous work.

No wonder if imagination has conjectured, on grounds like these, an identity of origin in certain exceptional instances, where the affinity in looks, gesture, or natural development of character, is a really flagrant fact, between man and brute. Sometimes educing the human from the brutish—as in Mr. Hawthorne's subtle romance of Transformation, in which Donatello figures so perfectly as the artist's marble Faun, miraculously softened into flesh and blood. Sometimes, by a reversal of the process, degrading the man into the lower nature,—as in the myth (here an unfinished process, however) of Lycus the Centaur, and other fantastic legends that, with

or without a direct ethical import, relate how man being in honour, abides not, but becomes like the beasts that perish.

In Bon Gaultier's ballad of Lycaon we read how a fearful change set in, whereby he lost the shape of man:

> His shoulders bare were clothed with hair,
> His limbs grew long and lean,
> Yet still you might trace on his wolfish face
> What once the wretch had been.
> The grisly locks were hard and stiff,
> The eye was cold and keen,
> And the savage sneer of Lycaon's mouth
> In the famished wolf was seen.

Wolfish in aspect and expression is King Olaf's standard-bearer in the Long Serpent's crew, as Mr. Longfellow paints ship and ship's company:

> Her forecastle man was Ulf the Red;
> Like a wolf's was his shaggy head,
> His teeth as large and white.

The Marchioness of Brinvilliers, murderess wholesale and retail, is said to have had the very look of a tiger-cat, in moments of excitement if not of stealthy repose. Lebrun made the sketch of her now in the Louvre, placing near it another sketch of a tiger, to show that the principal features were the same. The lady's look, as she sat in the executioner's cart, "crouching like a wild beast in the corner," was no doubt ferociously feline enough, considering her antecedents, her present, penultimate, and her paulo-post-future. For a ride in the executioner's

cart is comprehensive in respect of moods and tenses.

But our present purpose is to cite a medley of illustrations of the affinities that betray themselves, and come out, in a man's face and mien, between himself and what have been called his "fellow-lodgers" here on earth.

The dog, for example, has very frequently supplied argument for a similitude of the kind under review. Tasso, as Englished by Fairfax, has this canine comment on the leader of the Huns:

> Known by his look was Attila the fell,
> Whose dragon eyes shone bright with anger's spark;
> Worse faced than a dog, who view'd him well
> Supposed they saw him grin and heard him bark.

Lord Cockburn describes John Clerk of Eldin as having "very bushy eyebrows, coarse, grizzly hair, always in disorder, and firm, projecting features," which made his face and head "not unlike that of a thorough-bred shaggy terrier."

Lord Eldon's favourite dog Pincher is introduced into several portraits of his master, who said, "Poor fellow, he has a right to be painted with me, for when my man Smith took him the other day to a law-bookseller's, where there were several lawyers assembled, they all received him with great respect, and the master of the shop exclaimed, 'How very like he is to *old Eldon*, particularly when he wore a wig,'—but, indeed, many people say he is the better-looking chap of the two."

Mr. Disraeli's Lord Marylebone is a "short, thick, swarthy young gentleman, with wiry black hair, a nose somewhat flat, sharp eyes, and tusky mouth—altogether not very unlike a terrier."

Mr. Anthony Trollope's Old Bailey advocate, Mr. Chaffanbrass, had thrust his wig back, on the hot day of Alaric Tudor's trial, until the said wig stuck rather on the top of his coat-collar than on his head; and thus "his forehead seemed to come out like the head of a dog from his kennel, and he grinned with his black teeth, and his savage eyes twinkled, till the witnesses sank almost out of sight as they gazed at him." It is a characteristic point about this eminent counsel that his wig is never at ease upon his head, but is poked about by him, sometimes over one ear, sometimes over the other, now on the back of his head, and then on his nose; and that it is impossible to say in which guise he looks most cruel, most sharp, and most intolerably canine.

Could Mrs. Beecher Stowe's readers fancy a bull-dog come to man's estate, and walking about in a hat and coat, they would have no unapt idea, she assures them, of big, brawny, muscular, shaggy, fierce, brutal-looking Tom Loker.

But commend us to the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* for a racy illustration of canine affinity in facial expression, though in this case it is the brute's that becomes humanised. The Ettrick Shepherd thus discourses, on the bursting in of O'Bronte into the Sanctum, and placing his paws on his master's shoulders: "There's a pictur'. 'Twould be hard to

say whilk fizzionomy's the mair sagawceous. It's a gude sign o' a dowg, sirs, when his face grows like his master's. It's a proof he's aye glowerin' up in his master's een, to discover what he's thinkin' on; and then, without the word or wave of commaun', to be off to execute the wull o' his silent thocht, whether it be to wear sheep or rug doon deer. Hector got sae like me, afore he dee'd, that I remember, when I was owre lazy to gang till the kirk, I used to send him to tak my place till the pew, and the minister never kent the difference. Indeed, he ance asked me neist day what I thocht o' the sermon; for he saw me wonnerfu' attentive amang a rather sleepy congregation. Hector and me gied ane anither sic a look, and I was feared Mr. Paton wud hae observed it; but he was a simple, primitive, unsuspectin' auld man—a very Nathaniel without guile, and jaloused naething; though baith Hector and me was like to split, and the dowg, after lauchin' in his sleeve for mair nor a hundred yards, could staun't nae langer, but was obliged to loup awa' owre a hedge into a potawtoe field, pretendin' to hae scented partridges."*

The racy author of "Our Dogs"—the tear-compelling historian of "Rab and his Friends"—ought

* *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, No. li., for August, 1830,—a number not reprinted in the collected edition; probably because others besides Professor Wilson may have borne a hand in the composition,—Thomas de Quincey for one, in the elaborate defence of the English (pp. 426 *sqq.*) from the charge of national *edacity*.

to indite a treatise on the canine section of our subject. Two or three passing remarks he does make to the purpose. As where he tells us that his dog Peter resembles Mr. Roebuck. And elsewhere, that another dog of his, Wasp by name,—(ought not Wasp to have been Mr. Roebuck's Tear'em type?) —has "a curious look of that wonderful genius," Grisi, especially in his possession of "eyes as full of fire and of softness" as glorious Giuletta's. And of another dog of his, called Crab, Dr. John Brown further records, that he "had a great look* of the Right Honourable Edward Ellice, and had much of his energy and *wecht*." What has Coventry to say to that?

Mr. Assheton Smith was described by a fellow fox-hunter as "snake-headed, with a dash of the bull-dog."

That most personally lovable of modern painters, the late C. R. Leslie, tells us of Alexander Wilson, the ornithologist, that he himself looked like a bird; "his eyes were piercing, dark, and luminous; and his nose shaped like a beak."

The great Condé was curiously eagle-faced—the aquiline nose, as Dumas describes him, rising out sharply and incisively from a brow slightly retreating, rather low than high; a nose which some denied to be a human nose at all, but called it an eagle's beak, pure and simple.

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* "A great look of"—a Scoticism. So "a curious look of," in the Grisi simile.

The monkey tribe might be made contributories wholesale to our subject, did space allow. Already, among others, has Swift's couplet been quoted,

> As we say, *Monsieur* to an ape,
> Without offence to human shape;

and John Bull's inveterate disposition to refer all "grinning Frenchmen" to the monkey class, is but too well known. Here and there a distinguished Frenchman has notoriously justified the very invidious comparison. The Abbé Voisenon,—Fleury's favourite, the associate of Voltaire and the wits, and the sometime "chartered libertine" whose agreeable rattle pleased an Orleans and a Conti,—was so like an ape in facial lineaments and expression, that the resemblance gave treble effect to the piquant petulance of his vivacious table-talk.

The manners of Lord Monboddo, we are told, were not more odd than his personal appearance. "He looked rather like an old stuffed monkey, dressed in a judge's robes, than anything else." But was he not, on his own showing, near of kin to the monkey race?

Mr. Dickens pictures in his Cruncher couple, father and son, as they keep watch and ward at Tellson's Bank, "extremely like each other," "with their two heads as near to one another as the two eyes of each were," a curious resemblance to a pair of monkeys:—the resemblance not being lessened by the accidental circumstance, that the mature Jerry bit and spat out straw, while the twinkling eyes of the

youthful Jerry were as restlessly watchful of him as of everything else in Fleet-street.

The familiar remark on Henry the Fourth's bust at Holland House is, that he "looks like a goat." Not complimentary, maybe; but not uncharacteristic of that salacious sovran.—Vulpine in looks as well as nature was the Abbé Dubois—whose elongated snout, tawny hair, and eyes all a-twinkle with greed and craft, made him fox-like exceedingly.

The Rev. John Ward, of Stratford-upon-Avon, rules, that if a man have a sharp chin that stands forward, and a little forehead, "hee is brutish and stupid, like a hogge, whose image hee bears."

Mr. Trimmer's sons remember his and their old friend Turner (J. M. W.) as "an ugly, slovenly old man, with rather a pig-like face."

Of Catherine II., her English physician, Dr. (Baron) Dimsdale, used to assert, that the dignity of her countenance was "as of a majestic lion, a grand and noble royalty, with deep traces of the impress of an animal nature." Fuseli, of whom Leslie says that "his front face had very much the character of a lion," is described by Leigh Hunt as a small man, with energetic features, and a white head of hair, whom little Miss Hunter, the bookseller's daughter, used to call "the white-headed lion." For the old painter used to comb his hair up from the forehead; and as his whiskers were large, his face was set in a kind of hairy frame, which, in addition to the fierceness of his look, really gave him, Mr. Hunt says, an

aspect of that sort. Beethoven, again, was notably of leonine aspect. Well-known and read of all men is Mr. Carlyle's picture of Old Fritz, with "snuffy nose rather flung into the air, under its old cocked-hat,—like an old snuffy lion on the watch; and such a pair of eyes as no man or lion or lynx of that century bore elsewhere." His Kurfurst Albert Achilles, too, who did so much battling, with steel and other weapons, in the fifteenth century, has a "wildly leonine" aspect. Professor Wilson—meaning (for there are divers Professors Wilson) Christopher North—was noted for his leonine head and shoulders, and *mane*. Mr. James Hannay ascribes to the late Douglas Jerrold "a lion-like head, with falling light hair."—Schönborn, the eccentric friend of Lessing, Goethe, Perthes, and others better known than himself, had a right leonine face; and Perthes' biographer somewhat oddly records of the old Councillor that when he fell asleep at table, his "eyebrows would rise and fall like the mane" of that redoubtable beast. Of Zelter, again, Perthes said that he could never forget the hero-like form and lion-head of the man.

Chaucer reports of Arcite's august companion, "the gret Emetreus, the kyng of Ynde," that "as a *lyoun* he his lokyng caste." While of Palamoun's royal associate, "Ligurge himself, the grete kyng of Thrace," he says that "lik a *griffoun* lookéd he aboute." Dryden, in his version of this Canterbury Tale, transposes the leonine looks from the Indian to the Thracian potentate.

> With Palamon above the rest in place,
> Lycurgus came, the surly king of Thrace;
> Black was his beard, and manly was his face;
> The balls of his broad eyes rolled in his head,
> And glared betwixt a yellow and a red;
> He looked a lion with a gloomy stare,
> And o'er his eyebrows hung his matted hair.

By way of mane, we suppose. Somewhat to the same effect is Gray's bardic vision of Elizabeth, awing many a baron bold, and gorgeous dame, and bearded statesmen with

> Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face.

Speed begins a description of her reception of a Polish ambassador, by saying, "And thus she, lion-like rising," &c. As we are not living near Elizabeth's own time, we may venture on an abrupt transition from what was leonine in her looks to the same quality—same, said we? "like, but oh, how different!" in the Boniface of Peter Pindar's legendary tale:

> The landlord had a red, round face,
> Which some folks said, in fun,
> Resembled his Red Lion's phiz,
> And some, the rising sun.

In the portrait-gallery at Florence of great painters, Felix Mendelssohn was struck with the lion-like aspect of Leonardi da Vinci. Of Thorwaldsen, in Rome, "he looks like a lion," the same great brother artist in a sister art had previously observed. The author of Letters to Eusebius, himself a clergyman, tells of another clergyman he knew

"ages ago," an amiable excellent man, who went by the name of The Lion, he was so like one. He had, too, a manner of shaking his leonine head and mane at you, in coming into a room, that was quite frightful.' "I have often heard him tell the following anecdote of himself: He had to petition Lord Chancellor Thurlow for the transfer of a poor country Crown living from an uncle. Accordingly, the simple man waited on the Lord Chancellor. He heard old Thurlow roar out (as his name was announced), 'Show him in.' In he walks, shaking his head as usual, and looking very like a lion. Thurlow immediately cried out, 'Show him out!' adding, with an oath, *more suo*, 'I never saw such an ugly man in my life.' But he gave him what he wanted."

Captain Abbott's description of the looks of the Russian General Perofski, whom he met at Khiva in 1840, is curious, and (to coin a phrase) quote-worthy: "A man like a snake, of black complexion, yellow eyes, and a coat covered with ducats." Like a snake, partly, it is to be presumed, because the General was a slender figure, clad in green uniform.

The shrewdly pleasant author of "Rab and his Friends," in his description of Rab, that "sort of a compressed Hercules of a dog," casually observes to his readers, in his easy gossipping way: "You must have often observed the likeness of certain men to certain animals, and of certain dogs to men. Now, I never looked at Rab without thinking of the great Baptist preacher, Andrew Fuller. The same large, heavy, menacing, combative, sombre, honest coun-

tenance, the same inevitable eye, the same look—as of thunder asleep, but ready—neither a dog nor a man to be trifled with." The face of another great Baptist preacher, Robert Hall's, reminded some people of an exaggerated frog's.

In one of Theodore Hook's squibs, comparing a number of political personages to the several items in a bill of fare, we come across this tolerably (or as the noble lord concerned might call it, *in*tolerably) impudent stanza:

> For fish—that bench the Speaker's left on
> Outrivals Groves' to all beholders;
> No one can see my good Lord Sefton
> But thinks of a cod's head and shoulders.

So again, yet not exactly so, Lord Brougham, describing the outward aspect of that "excellent and eminent man," Dr. Lawrence, as "unwieldy and almost grotesque," tells us that "his mouth especially excited observation; and being fancied to resemble a shark's, the House of Commons' jest ran that Alderman Brook Watson, who had lost his leg by that animal's bite, avoided the side where the Doctor sat or lay."

Lord Brougham himself, by one who professes the most unbounded admiration for him, has been depicted as "not a beautiful man, on any theory of beauty," "rather a shaggy, gnarled, battered, weather-beaten, ugly, faithful, Scotch-collcy type," with a "tearing, mocking, pugnacious cast of countenance." "Now he crouches, very dog-like, on his crimson bench"—and then comes "a wrench, a wriggle, a

shake, a half turn and half start up—still very dog-like, but of the Newfoundland rather."

In the MS. notes of Lord Robartes (afterwards Earl of Radnor) on the Civil War, there is a curious notice of Lord Paget, who, he says, came to Court about 1641, and, talking to the Queen, boasted much of the power of the country lords, telling her, "Madam, we are as strong as Samson!" "My lord," replied Henrietta, "I easily believe it, seeing you want not among you the jawbone of an ass." Now the point of this jest lay in the fact that "this lord had a long lean face, not differing in length from that of an ass." Ever afterwards "this lord" went by the nickname of Samson,—and in a letter of the Marquis of Hertford's to the Queen, "Samson's" revolt is still to be read of.

Saint Thomas Aquinas was called by his companions the large mute ox of Sicily:—an epithet full of meaning, remarks Michelet, to all who have noticed the dreamy and monumental appearance of the ox of Southern Italy—to which the great (in every sense, physical and metaphysical, great) schoolman no doubt presented, in his bulky form, bovine frontispiece, and ox-eyed regards, an even ludicrous resemblance.—So Cardinal de Retz said of De Bouillon that with the perspicacity of an eagle he had the physiognomy of an ox.

Benvenuto Cellini seems to have had an open eye for physiognomical affinities of the kind we are engaged upon. One eminent fellow-artist he introduces by the name of Caradosso, as a corruption from

Cara d'Orso, Bear's Face,—which appellation was bestowed by an angry Spanish customer, in allusion to the man's Ursa Major ugliness. Cellini affirms that Cardinal Salviati's face was "liker that of an ass than a human creature," and his Eminence's behaviour correspondingly brutal in general, if not asinine in particular. The Grand Duke's steward, similarly inspected through the green spectacles Cellini was so wont to wear, is described by him as "crawling like a spider, with [a feeble voice resembling that of a gnat, and as slow as a snail in his motions." Subsequently he describes this same Lattanzio as answering him "with the shrill voice of a gnat, and using some odd fantastic gestures with his spider's hands." And when "the malicious Bandinello" turns upon our Benvenuto, it is of course "with a most brutish physiognomy" (what brute, Master Ben, say what brute?) as well as the most infamous epithets.

Byron records in his Diary: "I had a civet-cat the other day; but it ran away. It was the fiercest beast I ever saw, and like * * * in the face and manner." His lordship also journalises a visit to Exeter Change, where he saw "a hippopotamus, like Lord Liverpool in the face; and the Ursine Sloth hath the very voice and manner of my valet." Byron might, no doubt, have found matter for mirth in many another cage of the menagerie, had he been in the mood. Mr. Leigh Hunt takes frequent note of these physiognomical affinities. At one time he comes across *Horse* Kett: "At Oxford, I was introduced to Kett, the

poetry professor,—a good-natured man with a face like a Houyhnhnm (had Swift seen it, he would have thought it a pattern for humanity)." At another, he describes Madame Catalani as "a Roman, with the regular antelope face (if I may so call it): large eyes, with a sensitive elegant nose, and lively expression." At another, we revert to the equine analogy. Bonnycastle he describes as goggling over his plate, "like a horse. I often thought a bag of corn would have hung well on him. His laugh was equine, and showed his teeth upwards at the sides. Wordsworth, who notices similar mysterious manifestations on the part of donkeys, would have thought it ominous." Blanco White he describes as having a "long pale face, with prominent drooping nose, anxious and somewhat staring eyes, and a mouth turning down at the corners,"—the whole presenting an uncomfortably near resemblance to a cod's head and shoulders.

For there are faces whose traits are of the fish kind, fishy. Among the sons and daughters of men a piscatory physiognomy is not unknown, not even so very uncommon. In Hogarth's "Gate of Calais" there is an old fisherwoman to be seen, upon whose lap a huge skate is outspread; and critics notice that the painter has wickedly infused into the skate's countenance an expression precisely that of the crone herself. Or is the affinity meant to be interpreted *vice versa?*

The author of "Twice Round the Clock," finding himself in Billingsgate Market, at four in the morning, and in the act of gazing at the fishmongers

who there do congregate, speculates, after his whimsical wont, on the possible reason why they should, as a body, have small eyes. Can there be any mysterious sympathy, he asks, between them and the finny things they sell? "Do they, like the husband and wife, who loved each other so much, and lived together so long, that, although at first totally dissimilar in appearance, they grew at last to resemble one another feature for feature—become smaller and smaller-eyed as their acquaintance with the small-eyed fishes lengthens? I throw this supposition out as a subject for speculation for some future Lavater."

Would not John Dory's name have died with him, Southey asks, and so been long ago dead as a door-nail, if a grotesque likeness for him had not been discovered in the Fish, which being called after him has immortalised him and his ugliness? But if John Dory could have anticipated this sort of immortality when he saw his own face in the glass, he might very well have "blushed to find it fame."

The snake and serpent tribes, alas! are not unrepresented. It may be in some yellow-blooded creature of the class branded in Byron's Sketch from Private Life,

> If like a snake she steal within your walls,
> Till the black slime betray her as she crawls;
> If like a viper to the heart she wind,
> And leave the venom there she did not find, &c.—

with "cheek of parchment, and an eye of stone," and of the green and yellow complexion of her reptile race—

> For drawn from reptiles only may we trace
> Congenial colours in that soul or face.

Poetry and legend have made Lamia a common place. Philostratus, in his life of Apollonius, tells a good story of one. John Keats has made a celebrated poem of it—and a particular hit of the "grand transformation scene" from serpent to woman—from "a gordian shape of dazzling hue, Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue; Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard, Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd," to

> ——now a lady bright,
> A full-born beauty new and exquisite!

Coleridge has made weird work of it, witchingly beautiful, in his "Christabel," where the Lady Geraldine acts the accursed thing:

> A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
> And the lady's eyes they shrink in her head,
> Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
> And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
> At Christabel she looked askance!

And, again, has not Mr. Tennyson suggested the idea with subtle art, in his idyl of Merlin and Vivien—by the frequency of serpentine similitudes employed in depicting Vivien—her playing about the Wizard with slight and sprightly talk, and "faintly-venom'd points of slander"—her writhing towards him, twining her hollow feet together behind his ankle, "curving an arm about his neck," where she "clung like a snake;"—afterwards, when the duped

Wizard repels, too late, her wiles,—her leaping "from her session on his lap," and standing "stiff as a viper frozen;"—not forgetting how, in her last effort to regain dominion over a dotard, by sobbing plaint and remonstrance,

> The snake of gold slid from her hair, the braid
> Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh.

Or need we refer to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes's physiological romance of Elsie Venner? In that romance he casually remarks that some women unquestionably suggest the image of serpents; men rarely or never.

Charlotte Brontè once employs a masculine suggestion of the image. Relating the effect of Frances Henri's animated talk on the Professor's rude English friend, she says that the girl urged him with "an enthusiasm of curiosity, which ere long thawed Hunsden's reserve as fire thaws a congealed viper. I use this not very flattering comparison because he vividly reminded me of a snake waking from torpor, as he erected his tall form, reared his head, before a little declined," &c. &c.

The *ophidian* head and eye of Rachel, the great French actress, had struck Dr. Holmes in common with so many others. It was to a Foreign Actress —let us hope not to Rachel—that Barry Cornwall addressed some half-dozen stanzas, which come to an ophidian close, as follows:

> I see that your eyes are a serpent's;
> I know that your heart is stone;

That your love is as false as deadly;
And yet—I am yours alone!
Witch—Serpent—pitiless—worthless—
Look down where I writhe and sigh!
Speak! What must I do—or suffer?—
You hiss out an answer *Die!**

Mr. Disraeli ascribes to the tones of his Lucretia Colonna's low voice a something which "acted singularly on the nervous system. It was the voice of the serpent; indeed, there was an undulating movement in Lucretia, when she approached you, which irresistibly reminded you of that mysterious animal." If our memory serve, there are similar things said or implied in the case of the more famous, or infamous, Lucretia of Lord Lytton.

In another of the last-named author's fictions, we came across a certain Madame Caumartin, "her face, in shape, like a thorough-bred cobra-capella,—low, smooth frontal, widening at the summit; chin tapering, but jaw strong; teeth marvellously white, small, and with points sharp as those in the maw of the fish called the 'Sea Devil;' eyes like dark emeralds," of which the pupils, it is added, when she was angry or when she was scheming, retreated upward towards the temples, emitting a luminous green ray that shot through space like a gleam that escapes from a dark lantern. A very cobra, *cette dame là*, both *intus et in cute*.

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* Dramatic Scenes and Other Poems, by Barry Cornwall (1857). "To a Foreign Actress," p. 333.—Query: but how *hiss* out a monosyllable with no sibilant in it?

Let us now fairly lose ourselves in a medley of illustrations, chiefly from contemporary works of fiction,—some at least of which specimens may have the twofold interest of exemplifying our main theme, and indirectly or incidentally of showing each author's manner of observation and degree of physiognomical tact, or keenness of facial scrutiny.

There is my lord's housekeeper in Mr. Thackeray's Virginian story: "'Well, I never!' says Mrs. Quiggett, with a shrill, strident laugh, like a venerable old cockatoo—which white, hooked-nosed, long-lived bird Mrs. Quiggett strongly resembles." Accordingly Mrs. Quiggett is afterwards designated, without periphrasis or qualification, the old cockatoo.

Mrs. Bellasys, in "Guy Livingstone," the author describes as always reminding him of a certain tropical monkey—name unknown. "She wore her hair bushily on each side of her small face, just like the said intelligent animal, and had the same eager, rather frightened way of glancing out of her beady black eyes, accompanied by a quick turning of the head when addressed."

The author of "Maston Lynch" gives us a hybrid phiz, half elephant, half reptile, in the person of Mr. Lascelles, Hebrew and Money-lender; who is said to have had a nose like an overgrown sausage, which would have occupied the superficial area of an ordinary countenance, but in his case was kept within bounds by two enormous flabby cheeks in the semblance of batter puddings. "The pressure of these served also to squeeze a pair of loose leathery

lips into a state of chronic openness—a peculiarity which, with the overhanging proboscis, gave Mr. Lascelles an elephantine expression that was not attractive. The eyes of Mr. Lascelles were scarcely perceptible; but what there was of them leered villainously from under beetling brows, and above two flaccid protuberances resembling the throat of an iguana lizard." It is added, that there was a coldblooded look about Mr. Lascelles altogether; and that his hands, which were small and fat, seemed to curl up with constitutional torpor into the recesses of his coat-sleeves—suggesting the bizarre notion, that when they were wanted to grasp anything they would expand like the gullet of a boa-constrictor. Altogether, a zoological concrete as undesirable as need be, in romance or in real life.

Sir Arthur Elton gives us an Austrian General with a face strongly resembling a yellow poodle dog.

When Margaret Hale asks Nicholas Higgins what sort of man his master, Mr. Thornton, is—"Did yo' ever seé a bull-dog?" is the interrogative reply: "Set a bull-dog on hind legs, and dress him up in coat and breeches, and yo'n just getten John Thornton." Which Miss Hale, however, ventures laughingly to deny—saying that Mr. Thornton is plain enough, but not like a bull-dog, with its short broad nose, and snarling upper lip. In a subsequent chapter, Mrs. Gaskell herself suggests a certain canine expression in this John Thornton's mother, when that stern old dame is setting her face—and her teeth, look you—against John's love-match: "She

set her teeth; she showed them like a dog for the whole length of her mouth."

In another of Mrs. Gaskell's novels, a young lady likens an attractive gentleman to a race-horse. "Nonsense," her mother protests; "you must not say so. I don't know what your father would say, if he heard you likening Mr. Donne to a brute." "Brutes are sometimes very beautiful, mamma. I am sure I should think it a compliment to be likened to a race-horse, such as the one we saw [at Wakefield]. But the thing in which they are alike, is the sort of repressed eagerness in both. . . . Have you never seen a dull red light come into his eyes? That is like my race-horse. Her flesh quivered over at certain sounds and noises which had some meaning to her; but she stood quite still, pretty creature! Now, Mr. Donne is just as eager as she was, though he may be too proud to show it," &c.

Colonel Whyte Melville shows us his Lady Visigoth "tossing her head like one of her own carriage-horses; indeed, her face strongly resembled that of the Roman-nosed one that went on the near side."

Currer Bell describes the features of Mr. Hunsden as of a kind that might have done well on canvas, but indifferently in marble, for which they were too plastic: character having set a stamp upon each, expression re-cast them at her pleasure; and strange metamorphoses she wrought, "giving him now the mien of a morose bull, and anon that of an arch and mischievous girl;" while, more frequently, the two semblances (of *Taurus* and *Virgo*) were blent into

one, and a queer, composite countenance they may well be supposed to have made.

The same writer's Mademoiselle Reuter is Lavaterised in very minute details, and a long analysis of her pleasant but "rather crafty" smile, her firm but "rather harsh" expression about the mouth, &c., is followed by the notification, that "if gentlemen approach her chair, a deeper quiescence, a meeker modesty settles on her features, and clothes her general mien; observe then her eyebrows [for on the craft in her eyebrows M. Pelet lays great stress], et dîtes-moi s'il n'y a pas du chat dans l'un et du renard dans l'autre." Then, too, there is the Belgian damsel, Adèle Dronsart—so young, fresh, blooming, yet so Gorgon-like; with suspicion and sullen ill-temper on her forehead, vicious propensities in her eye, "envy and *panther*-like deceit about her mouth."

Mr. Disraeli gives us a gentleman with hyæna eyes, and a lady "tall, dusky, and lithe," "glancing like a lynx, and graceful as a jennet." His observation extends, moreover, to affinities of expression in animals *inter se*; as where he introduces a certain "ugly pony, with an obstinate mane, which defying the exertions of the groom, fell in equal divisions on both sides of its bottle neck; and a large white face, which, combined with its blinking vision, had earned for it the euphonious title of Owl-face."

Mr. Tennyson's mad lover takes liberties *ad lib.* with the looks of his lady-love's father,—

> Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
> A gray old wolf and a lean.

Mr. Hawthorne, in his old Moodie, pictures one "whose manners, being so furtive, remind" one of those of "a rat,—a rat without the mischief, the fierce eye, the teeth to bite with, or the desire to bite." Barring these salient points, however, may almost seem a reductio ad absurdum of the comparison, like a rat, to the level of poor old Polonius's *Very* like a whale.

Mr. Carlyle takes note of the "dark *rat*-eyed look" of the Dominican monk said to have poisoned Kaiser Henry VII. Also of the noble lord called Rindsmaul—"not lovely of lip, *Cow*-mouth so called," —who disarmed Austrian Friedrich at the Fight at Mühldorff in 1322. Also of Kurfurst Albert Achilles, as "wildly leonine," or rather, perhaps, *aquiline* of look—being "a tall hook-nosed man, of lean, sharp, rather taciturn aspect; nose and look very aquiline." Also of the old rugged Dessauer, Prince Leopold's face, "with the whiskers and blue skin he was wont to do in caricature, under the figure of a *Cat's*." And again, of that "*goat*-faced Eminence," ugliest of created souls, Cardinal Dubois.

That is not a bad story Chamfort tells of a M. de Sourches, an ugly little man, absurdly like an owl, who once fussily observing, as he retired for the night, "Voilà la première fois, depuis deux ans, que je vais coucher chez moi," the Bishop of Adge, turning and looking at his queer phiz and person, suggestively remarked, "Monsieur perche, apparemment?"

M. de Vendôme said of Madame de Nemours, who

had a long hooked nose curving over vermilion lips, that she had the look of a parrot eating a cherry.

A certain gaol-chaplain of George Eliot's drawing is "a sharp ferrety-faced man." So Mr. Sala tells us of Sims, alias Desborough, in the most popular of his fictions, that "in face and gesture he is not unlike a ferret;" and that, grinning, "his face looks more and more like a ferret."

Stand again with Mr. Sala on Epsom Downs, and take note of the hot, dusty, streaming, common, knavish, and brutal faces of Messieurs the Book-makers there assembled. "Now the wolf-type, hungry and savage; now the fox-type, cunning and cynical; . . . now the terrier-type, honest enough, but exceedingly ravenous after rats. Men—old betting men—with faces like owls, like magpies, like ravens; not many of the eagle-type, save in so far as aquiline noses reach. . . . And there are weasel faces, ferret faces, grinning-otter faces, hawk-faces, bull-dog faces, and bull-faces."

Of course Mr. Dickens positively revels in recreations of this class of comparative physiognomy.—My Lady's maid, the Frenchwoman Hortense, in "Bleak House," is described as a large-eyed brown woman, with black hair, who would be handsome, but for a certain "*feline* mouth," and general uncomfortable tightness of face, rendering the jaws too eager, and the skull too prominent. There is something indefinably keen and wan about her anatomy; and she has a watchful way of looking out of the corners of her eyes without turning her head, which

could be pleasantly dispensed with—especially when she is in an ill humour and near knives. "Through all the good taste of her dress and little adornments, these objections so express themselves, that she seems to go about like a very neat She-Wolf imperperfectly tamed."

And then how elaborately, minutely, and pertinaciously Mr. Dickens works out, not to say overworks, the *feline* expression of Carker, the Manager in the House of Dombey and Son. That gentleman is introduced with two unbroken rows of glistening teeth, whose irregularity and whiteness are quite distressing; and he bears so wide a smile upon his face (a smile, however, very rarely indeed extending beyond his mouth), that there is "something in it like the snarl of a cat." In the interview he had with honest simple Captain Cuttle, "a cat, or a monkey, or a death's head, could not have shown the Captain more teeth at one time, than Mr. Carker showed him." And when they part, we are told that in Mr. Carker's sly look and watchful manner; in his false mouth, stretched but not laughing; in his spotless cravat and very whiskers; even in the silent passing of his soft hand over his white linen and his smooth face; "there was something desperately cat-like." Here again is a full-length feline portrait of him, at his desk, examining his letters with the air of a player at cards: "And although it is not among the instincts wild or domestic of the cat tribe to play at cards, feline from sole to crown was Mr. Carker the Manager, as he basked in the

strip of summer-light and warmth that shone upon his table and the ground as if they were a crooked dial-plate, and himself the only figure in it. With hair and whiskers deficient in colour at all times, but feebler than common in the rich sunshine, and more like the coat of a sandy tortoiseshell cat; with long nails, nicely pared and sharpened; with a natural antipathy to any speck of dirt, which made him pause sometimes and watch the falling motes of dust, and rub them off his smooth white hand or glossy linen: Mr. Carker the Manager, sly of manner, sharp of tooth, soft of foot, watchful of eye, oily of tongue, cruel of heart, nice of habit, sat with a dainty steadfastness and patience at his work, as if he were waiting at a mouse's hole."

Prospering in his schemes that day, "complacent and affable as man could be, Mr. Carker picked his way along the streets and hummed a soft tune as he went. He seemed to purr: he was so glad.—And in some sort, Mr. Carker, in his fancy, basked upon a hearth, too. Coiled up snugly at certain feet, he was ready for a spring, or for a tear, or for a scratch, or for a velvet touch, as the humour took him and occasion served."—And when Floy's dog, Diogenes, manifests an instinctive hostility to this gentleman, the author can't refrain from cheering on old growler, with "You have a good scent, Di,—cats, boy, cats!"—In a subsequent interview with Mr. Dombey, one of Carker's looks is thus interpreted: "Wolf's face that it was then, with even the hot tongue revealing itself through the stretched mouth, as the eyes en-

countered Mr. Dombey's." And at a still later one we have this bit of feline by-play: "Carker . . . . replied with a smile, and softly laying his velvet hand, as a cat might have laid its sheathed claws, on Mr. Dombey's arm."

That sprightly scion of the stately house of Dedlock, elderly Miss Volumnia, is represented as very *bird-like* in her manner, as she sidles about with a golden glass in her eye, peering into objects of every description—"hovering over her kinsman's letters and papers like a bird; taking a short peck at this document, and a blink with her head on one side at that document, and hopping about from table to table with her glass at her eye in an inquisitive and restless manner."

Good Mrs. Brown, as, by the rule of contraries, the withered hag who persecutes Rob the Grinder is called, is likened both in features and gestures to a crab,—"going backwards [after picking up Mr. Carker's shilling], like a crab, or like a heap of crabs: for her alternately expanding and contracting hands might have represented two of that species, and her creeping face some half a dozen more."

Irreverently enough Jonas Chuzzlewit remarks to his cousin Charity, of her imposing papa Pecksniff, "What a sleek, sly chap he is! Just like a tom-cat, an't he?"—Poll Sweedlepipe is said to have had something of the bird in his nature (he is a bird-fancier, by the way); not of the hawk or eagle, but of the sparrow, that builds in chimney stacks, and inclines to human company. He is not quarrelsome,

though, like the sparrow, but peaceful, like the dove. "In his walk, he strutted; and, in this respect, he bore a faint resemblance to the pigeon, as well as in a certain prosiness of speech, which might, in its monotony, be likened to the cooing of that bird. He was very inquisitive; and when he stood at his shop-door in the evening-tide, watching the neighbours, with his head on one side, and his hat cocked knowingly, there was a dash of the raven in him. Yet there was no more wickedness in Poll than in a robin." Happily, too, it is added, when any of his ornithological properties were on the verge of going too far, they quenched, dissolved, melted down, and neutralised in the barber; just as his bald head—otherwise, as the head of a shaved magpie—lost itself in a wig of curly black ringlets, parted on one side, and cut away almost to the crown, to indicate immense capacity of intellect.

In his bedroom at the Salisbury inn he puts up at, Tom Pinch observes hanging over the fireplace a graphic representation in oil of a remarkably fat ox, "and the portrait of some former landlord, who might have been the ox's brother, he was so like him."

Of Mr. Craggs, Mr. Snitchey, and Doctor Jeddler, in the "Battle of Life," we are informed, that each of them might be taken for a fanciful representative of one of the three natural kingdoms; for as Mr. Craggs, a cold, hard, dry man, dressed in grey and white, resembled a flint, "with small twinkles in his eyes, as if something struck sparks out of them,"—so Mr. Snitchey "was like a magpie or a raven (only

not so sleek),"—and the Doctor had a "streaked face like a winter pippin, with here and there a dimple to express the peckings of the birds, and a very little bit of pigtail behind that stood for the stalk." In another place, and performing a country-dance, the Doctor's rosy face is said to have "spun round and round like an expressive pegtop highly varnished." Tackleton, the morose toy-merchant, in another of the Christmas Books, is depicted with "his whole sarcastic ill-conditioned self peering out of one little corner of one little eye, like the concentrated essence of any number of ravens."

Jesse Hexam, to whom we are introduced as the first man in the first chapter of Mr. Dickens's latest fiction, "was a hooked-nose man, and with that and his bright eyes and his ruffled head, bore a certain likeness to a roused bird of prey." Farther on again: "The figure at the red fire turned, raised its ruffled head, and looked like a bird of prey." And then: "he had the special peculiarity of some birds of prey, that when he knitted his brow, his crest stood highest." Anon: "It being now past midnight, the bird of prey went straight to roost."—Time for us to go and do likewise.

SUNSHINE OUT OF SEASON.

DESDEMONA dead, Othello, who has done her to death, stands looking on. He thinks she stirs again. No. No more moving. Still as the grave.—Emilia's footfall is heard outside. Shall he admit her? If she comes in, she'll sure speak to his wife. His *wife*? —the word escaped him unawares; and instantly all that its import can suggest arouses in him a storm of frenzied grief and despair:

> My wife! my wife! what wife?—I have no wife:
> O insupportable! O heavy hour!

And then comes the thought which for ever and ever will occur to the bereaved among the children of men, that surely Nature should sympathise with a sorrow like his, like theirs; that the sun should hide his face for a season, and sunshine be veiled and be clouded, until at least the tyranny of this great anguish be overpast.

> Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
> Of sun and moon.

How can the soul thus overwhelmed by some master woe, endure the light of gaudy babbling day, or even

the softer sheen of moon and stars that govern the night? Should they not all be darkened for a while, is the self-absorbed mourner's wistful query,—so that the sun may not mock me by day, neither the moon by night?

What but the blackness of darkness befits such insupportable and heavy hour,—darkness that may be felt? Let such darkness be the burier of the dead.

It has been remarked—but this by the way—that the daylight changes the aspect of misery to us, as of everything else: In the night it presses on our imagination—the forms it takes are false, fitful, exaggerated; in broad day it sickens our sense with the dreary persistence of definite measurable reality. "The man who looks with ghastly horror on all his property aflame in the dead of night, has not half the sense of destitution he will have in the morning, when he walks over the ruins lying blackened in the pitiless sunshine."

Condolence catches at any semblance on Nature's part of sympathy with the griefs of humankind, and affects to soothe the bereaved with such outward and visible sign. So the Prince of Verona, in another of Shakspeare's tragedies, speaks words of comfort, such as they are, to childless Capulet and childless Montague, in bidding them discern the face of the sky, at daybreak after Romeo's, and Juliet's, death:

> A glooming peace this morning with it brings;
> The sun for sorrow will not show his head.

And the same great poet makes the very Goddess of

Beauty and Love adopt Othello's style, when the bleeding corpse of him she loved lies on the green sward before her:

> Wonder of time, quoth she, this is my spite,
> That, you being dead, the day should yet be light.

Byron, in his bitterness of soul, bids man gaze on the smiling glories of mighty Nature, while yet his gladdened eye may see:

> A morrow comes when they are not for thee:
> And grieve what may above thy senseless bier,
> Nor earth nor sky will yield a single tear;
> Nor cloud shall gather more, nor leaf shall fall,
> Nor gale breathe forth one sigh for thee, for all.

When the Empress Irene put out the eyes of her son Constantine, a subsequent darkness over the whole land for seventeen days was attributed by superstition to that bloody deed; during which darkness many vessels in mid-day were driven from their course, as if, says Gibbon, the sun, a globe of fire so vast and so remote, could sympathise with the atoms of a revolving planet.

Montaigne quotes but to deride "that idle fancy" of the Roman People, that for a whole year the sun carried in his face mourning for Cæsar's death; and cites with approval the doctrine of Pliny, that there is no such affinity betwixt us and heaven, that the brightness of the stars should be made mortal by our mortality. *Non tanta cœlo societas nobiscum est, ut nostro fato mortalis sit ille quoque siderum fulgor.*

Familiar to us all is a passage in Pope's correspondence in which the writer, like Othello, has his "methinks." When he reflects what an inconsiderable little atom every single man is, with respect to the whole creation, "methinks," says he, "'tis a shame to be concerned at the removal of such a trivial animal as I am. The morning after my exit, the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green, the world will proceed in its old course, people will laugh as heartily, and marry as fast as they were used to do."

Boswell defends "Pope's plaintive reflexion," as natural and common. Mr. *Ingoldsby* Barham versifies and diversifies it, in an unwonted interval of gravity:

> And thus 'twill be,—nor long the day,—
> Ere we, like him, shall pass away!
> Yon sun, that now *our* bosom warms,
> Shall shine,—but shine on other forms;—
> Yon grove, whose choir so sweetly cheers
> Us now, shall sound on other ears,—
> The joyous Lamb, as now, shall play,
> But other eyes its sports survey,—
> The stream we love shall roll as fair,
> The flowery sweets, the trim parterre
> Shall scent, as now, the ambient air,—
> The Tree, whose bending branches bear
> The One loved name—shall yet be there;
> But where the hand that carved it?—Where?

The Shepherd in the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, waxing sentimental, some might think well-nigh maudlin, towards the close of a symposium, breaks out into the articulate reverie, "I sometimes wunner how the

warld will gang on when I'm dead. It's no vanity, or ony notion that I gar the wheels o' the warld wark, that makes me think sae, but just an incapacity to separate my life frae the rest o' creation. Suns settin and risin, and me no there to glower! Birds singin, the mavis in the wood, and the laverock in the lift, and me no there to list—list—listen! . . . . Some ane, lovelier than the lave, singin ane o' my ain sangs, and me in the unhearin grave!" The same Gentle Shepherd can ungently, if not ungenerously, snub Mr. Ambrose for a spice of sentiment of the like flavour—though it must be owned the snub is not inconsistent with the preliminary protest of the foregoing quotation. North is asleep, the Shepherd muses on sleep's affinity to death; and Mr. Ambrose—fervent worshipper of the Old Man with the Crutch—is indignant and shocked. "How can you utter the word death in relation to him, Mr. Hogg? Were he dead, the whole world might shut up shop." "Na, na," retorts the Shepherd. "Ye micht, but no the warld. There never leeved a man the warld missed, ony mair than a great, green, spreading simmer tree misses a leaf that fa's doun on the moss aneath its shadow." One of Swift's many squibs on the alleged death of poor persecuted protesting Partridge the Almanack-maker, ruthlessly points out that

> The sun has rose and gone to bed,
> Just as if Partridge were not dead;
> Nor hid himself behind the moon,
> To make a dreadful night at noon.

Sir Walter Scott, in his manly way, when writing his first letter to his eldest son after the young Cornet had joined his regiment, tells him: "The girls were very dull after you left us; indeed, the night you went away, Anne had hysterics, which lasted some time. Charles also was down in the mouth, and papa and mamma a little grave and dejected. I would not have you think yourself of too great importance neither, for the greatest personages are not always long missed, and to make a bit of a parody—

> Down falls the rain, up gets the sun,
> Just as if Walter were not gone."

The pathetic exhortations on country tombstones, "Grieve not for me, my wife and children dear," &c., are for the most part, says William Hazlitt, speedily followed to the letter: we do not leave so great a void in society as we are inclined to imagine: people walk along the streets the day after our deaths just as they did before, and the crowd is not diminished. Well knows and keenly feels the poet as he looks his last on the rivulet, that, when he is gone, the rivulet will flow on gaily as of old, and sunshine gladden it with golden radiance, and moonshine silver it with softest lustre,—and *he* dead and gone the while:

> A thousand suns will stream on thee,
> A thousand moons will quiver;
> But not by thee my steps shall be,
> For ever and for ever.

The same poet's listener to the Two Voices weeps as he meditates on these things:

> I wept, "Tho' I should die, I know
> That all about the thorn will blow
> In tufts of rosy-tinted snow.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Not less the bee would range her cells,
> The furzy prickle fire the dells,
> The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

It is only by poetical licence that the opposite and more comfortable doctrine is set up, or *was*, when the last minstrel sang his lay:

> Call it not vain:—they do not err
> Who say that, when the Poet dies,
> Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
> And celebrates his obsequies.
> Who say, tall cliff and cavern lone
> For the departed bard make moan;
> That mountains weep in crystal rill;
> That flowers in tears of balm distil;
> Thro' his loved grove that breezes sigh,
> And oaks, in deeper groan, reply;
> And rivers teach their rushing wave
> To murmur dirges round his grave.

Agamemnon, king of men, removed by murder most foul and most unnatural, the Chorus in a modern version of the old tragedy take the popular side of the argument, as becomes their time and place and creed:

> O awful sight! Look where the bloody sun,
> As tho' with Agamemnon he were slain,
> Runs reeking, lurid, down the palace floors!

And again,—changing the metre, not the mood:—

——Earth shall wear
Mourning for him. See, the sun
Blushes red for what is done!
And the wild stars, one by one,
Peep out of the lurid air,
And shrink back with awe and fear,
Shuddering for what is done.

Not so reads Electra the sympathy of the skies, when the murder is accomplished. "Murder'd! Ay,

And the sun blackens not; the world is green;
The fires of the dead west are not put out,
Is not the cricket singing in the grass?
And the shy lizard shooting thro' the leaves?
I hear the ox low in the labour'd field,
Those swallows build, and are as garrulous
High up i' the towers,"

as if her father were not lying cold in death.

A bitter loss to Francis Jeffrey was that of his sister, Mrs. Napier, in 1804. "Poor dear love," he writes, to a surviving sister, "I kissed her cold lips, and pressed her cold wan lifeless hand, and would willingly at that moment have put off my own life too and followed her. When I came here the sun was rising, and the birds were singing gaily, as I sobbed along the empty streets. I thought my heart would have burst at that moment."

In the first of those stories of clerical life which opened out to "George Eliot" so brilliant a literary career, there is a touching picture of the needy curate, Amos Barton, returning home from the burial

of his wife, and noting the broad snow-reflected daylight in all the rooms, which had been darkened when he started. She was gone, and the Vicarage, no longer shutting out the sunshine, "again seemed part of the common working-day world; and Amos, for the first time, felt that he was alone. . . . Spring would come, and she would not be there."* Out of season, now, would seem to him spring-tide and summer-tide; with him it would be winter all the year round.

> The sunbeams through the casement peep
> And glint along thy chamber floor;
> What seek they here? thy morning sleep
> They break no more.

To many and many a mourner seems the first daybreak after a great loss to mean heartbreak too. It was a bright and joyous morning that dawned on Henry Granby, after watching the dissolution of his best friend. A clear light, we read, just tinged the edges of the hills, while a thin cool haze, like a silver gauze, was lightly thrown across the valleys. The birds had begun their early carol, and "the cock's shrill clarion" echoed in the distance. All told of renovated life—all spoke the voice of joy and promise. "It was a sight to cheer all hearts—all, save that of the desolate mourner, who looked out upon

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* It is a significant touch in the same story, that Amos Barton receives a letter of bad news on a bright morning. "It was a very bright morning, and evil tidings sometimes like to fly in the finest weather."—Scenes of Clerical Life, ch. ix.

this fair scene from the silent chamber of death. To him it gave far other feelings. It added an impulse to his grief.

"It seemed as if Nature had unkindly withheld her sympathy. All without was bright and gay, and breathed of life and cheerfulness—all within was solemn as the grave. He turned his eyes from the death-bed of his benefactor, to the brilliant spectacle of reviving nature, and the cruel contrast deepened the gloom of his situation."

Here it is youth mourning for age. In Miss Ferrier's "Destiny" there is a parallel passage in the sensations of a bereaved father bewailing his son. The blue waves curled gaily to the summer breeze, the sun poured forth his meridian splendour, and all creatures seemed exulting in the joyfulness of existence. "Could all these things be, if he, who in his father's eyes had given life to all, was dead?—he, the heir of all this goodly scene, laid in his cold grave?"

> The lake is still the same, the changeful skies
> Change by a Law that we may not control;
> Sage Nature is not bound to sympathise
> With every passion of a human soul.

And therefore,

> Look not for sorrow in the changeful skies,
> The mountain many-hued, or passive lake.

So muses Julian, in M. Bungener's historico-religious fiction, in reference to himself. Himself away, and what of all he saw would have been changed?

Would the sun arise less radiantly? Would the birds sing less blithely? No. There would not be one leaf more or less upon the trees, not one blade of grass more or less in the turf, not one drop of dew more or less upon the flowers. "In all this our pride is less bruised than our heart. This feeling is a sort of reproach of nature: it seems to us ungrateful of her to regret us so little who have loved her so much. We could wish her, when we are gone, to perceive that we are no longer there to admire and love her: the grief of even a flower or a leaf, would make us happier than all the tokens of regret with which our tomb might be adorned. Those cypress-trees, those funeral shrubs, with which, possibly, it may be surrounded—we know well enough that their seeming grief is not for us." To adopt Shenstone's very Shenstonian, and therefore supremely sentimental strain:

> Of those loved flowers the lifeless corse may share,
> Some hireling hand a fading wreath bestow;
> The rest will breathe as sweet, will glow as fair
> As when their master smiled to see them glow.
>
> The sequent morn shall wake the sylvan quire;
> The kid again shall wanton ere 'tis noon;
> Nature will smile, will wear her best attire, &c. &c.

Desolate, heart-sore Kathie Brandę goes up to her brother's room one quiet April evening when the sun is setting, and stands awhile at the window watching the sky. It was brightly, gorgeously beautiful, but to her inexpressibly dreary. "There

seemed to be no pity in heaven; its glow and glory mocked me. 'It would shine so if he were dead,' I thought. There was the blackness of mourning nowhere but in my heart."

So when Margaret Hale, now motherless, now fatherless too, revisited the home she was no orphan when she left, "it hurt her to see the Helstone road so flooded in the sunlight, and every turn and every familiar tree so precisely the same in its summer glory as it had been in former years. Nature felt no change, and was ever young."

Continually is the silence and permanence of Nature thus contrasted with the perpetual flux and noise of human life. Who, it has been asked, thinks of his death without thinking of it? who thinks of it without thinking of his death? The mother, whose thoughts dwell about her baby in the churchyard—the sister, of her sister who died last year, or of her brother who was lost at sea, say first and last: "There the sea rolls, ever as ever; and rages and smiles, and surges and sighs just the same; and were you and I and the whole world to be drowned today, and all the brave ships to go down with standing sails, to-morrow there would not be a drop the more in the ocean, nor on its surface a smile the less. Does not the rain rain upon my baby's grave, and the sun shine upon it, as indifferent as if there were neither babies nor mothers in the world?" Why, this strain is to be found in all the poetry that ever was written. As in the last of certain Last Words, whispered by a failing voice:

Nature takes no notice of those that are coming or going.
To-morrow make ready my grave, Will. To-morrow the flowers will be blowing.

More sensible he than Werther, who, on the night of his death, rhapsodically apostrophises Nature, with a monition to provide herself with funeral attire for the occasion: "Yes, Nature! put on mourning; your child, your friend, your lover, draws near his end!" This spoilt child would have his quasi Mother regardless of expense in putting on black for him. But Mother Nature is strictly economical in such matters, nor cares to fool even her spoilt children to quite the top of their bent.

In that strange, sad story of Mr. de Quincey's, not republished among his collected writings, "The Household Wreck,"—a story of agitated suspense and emotion all compact,—the remark, at the opening of one paragraph, that "Morning came on as usual," even to the bewildered husband, dejected to the uttermost and perplexed in the extreme, induces the reflection that, if strange, it is still most true, that to the very wretched it seems wonderful that times and seasons should keep their appointed courses in the midst of such mighty overthrows and such interruption in the courses of their own wonted happiness and their habitual expectations. Why should morning and night, why should all movements in the natural world be so regular, whilst in the moral world all is so irregular and anomalous? Yet the sun and moon rise and set as usual upon the mightiest revolutions of empire and of worldly for-

tune that this planet ever beholds; and it is sometimes even a comfort to know that this will be the case.*

In the writings of Lord Lytton may be found frequent illustrations of the theme now before us. As where Lady Vargrave with slow steps and downcast eyes paces the favourite walk that leads to the quiet burial-ground. "The gate closed upon her; and now the lawn—the gardens—the haunts of Evelyn, were solitary as the desert itself; but the daisy opened to the sun, and the bee murmured along the blossoms, not the less blithely for the absence of all human life. In the bosom of Nature there beats no heart for man." †

Or as where Pisani, the musical enthusiast, falls dead to the ground, and breaks his instrument in the fall. "Broken instrument—broken heart. . . .

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* "A great criminal, sentenced to an agonising punishment, has derived a fortitude and a consolation from recollecting that the day would run its inevitable course . . . and that the evening star would rise as usual, and shine with its untroubled lustre upon the dust and ashes of what *had* indeed suffered, and so recently, the most bitter pangs, but would then have ceased to suffer."—The Household Wreck. (Blackwood, 1838.)

† In quoting the above passage, one liberty is taken with the mere mechanical framework of the text. The note of admiration is omitted, favourite though it be of the author's—favourite of the spoilt child sort. Notes of admiration are redundant with him—or were. To omit such, is surely no *sin* of omission. Every such note of admiration seems, like Katerfelto's hair, to stand on end at its own wonders. Too importunately it challenges admiration—every note its own trumpeter.

The setting sun through the vine-clad lattice streamed on all. So smiles the eternal Nature on the wrecks of all that make life glorious. And not a sun that sets not somewhere on the silenced music —on the faded laurel."* Towards the close of the same story, the musician's daughter is seen, tending her child, amid the gloom and alarms of France's Reign of Terror: The sunlight comes through the open casement, "gleesome alike in temple and prisón, hall and hovel; as golden and as blithe, whether it laugh over the first hour of life, or quiver in its gay delight on the terror and agony of the last."†

Admirably truthful is "George Eliot's" incidental mention of Maggie Tulliver's depression, at early dawn, after tending her paralysed father through the night watches. She had that strange dreamy weariness which comes from watching in a sick-room through the chill hours of early twilight and breaking day—in which "the outside daylight life seems to have no importance, and to be a mere margin to the hours in the darkened chamber."

* From this excerpt again, which comprises three sentences, are omitted three notes of admiration; one apiece.

† Again the *terminus ad quem* note of admiration is omitted. It is pleasant to mark, and only just to remark, the comparative scarcity of these too demonstrative notes in Lord Lytton's later, and especially his latest works. Still, they do occasionally turn up, and that two at a time. For example, in the Caxtonian Essay on Motive Power: "We can often, though not always, foresee whether a man may become a great writer; but a great man of action—no!!"—Caxtoniana, vol. ii., p. 63.

Very truthful, again, is the description, in the Chronicles of Carlingford, of the feelings of Vincent and his widowed mother, in their "transit through London in the bustling sunshine of the winter morning after the vigil" of a night of anguish, and in the frightful suspense and excitement of their minds; and how Vincent remembered, for years after, "certain cheerful street-corners," round which they turned from one station to another, with shudders of recollection, and an intense consciousness of all the life circulating about them. So, too, when they reach home, the sunshiny street is a trouble to them; and "everything wore the most sickening, oppressive brightness within in fresh Saturday cleanliness." The little maid, "in holiday attire," who has opened the door for them so briskly, cannot "comprehend the groan with which the young man startled all the clear and sunshiny atmosphere." And the next day, Sunday,—when by the name of the day it should seem as though sunshine were never out of season,—is yet characterised, in the experience of these sufferers, as "another horrible, sunshiny, cheerful day," cruel in its radiant superiority to their woe.

Mrs. Stowe, in her elaborate description of the ravages of cholera in the sunny South, tells of the day breaking gladsome and jubilant, as if sorrow, sighing, and death were a dream of the night; and observes that, during the whole prevalence of this fearful curse, "it was strange to witness the unaltered regularity, splendour, and beauty with which

the movements of the natural world went on. Amid fears, and dying groans, and wailings, and sobs, and broken hearts the sun rose and set in splendour, the dews twinkled, and twilight folded her purple veil heavy with stars; birds sang, waters danced and warbled, flowers bloomed, and everything in nature was abundant, and festive, and joyous."

That must be a strange feeling, mused the moralist of Vanity Fair, when a day of our life comes and we say, "*To-morrow*, success or failure won't matter much: and the sun will rise, and all the myriads of mankind go to their work or their pleasure as usual, but I shall be out of the turmoil." So there came one morning and sunrise, when all the world got up and set about its various works and pleasures, with the exception—for this is the text of Mr. Thackeray's homily—of old Joseph Sedley, who was not to fight with fortune, or to hope and scheme any more: but to go and take up a quiet and utterly unknown residence in a churchyard at Brompton by the side of his old wife.

Observe, again, Esmond and the Dean walking away from Kensington in full discourse of the tragedy of Duke Hamilton's death, while the street-criers are already out with their broadsides, shouting through the town the full, true, and horrible account of the fate of Lord Mohun and Duke Hamilton in a duel. "The sun was shining though 'twas November: he [Esmond] had seen the market carts rolling into London, the guard relieved at the Palace, the

labourers trudging to their work in the gardens between Kensington and the City, the wandering merchants and hawkers filling the air with their cries. The world was going to its business again, although dukes lay dead and ladies mourned for them; and kings, very likely, lost their chances. So night and day pass away, and to-morrow comes, and our place knows us no more."

Or take what may in some sort be called a companion picture, by the most popular of Mr. Thackeray's brethren of the pen.—There is a duel at daybreak of Mr. Dickens's describing, which ends in a death. And of the dead man's couching-place on the turf we read, that the sun came proudly up in all his majesty, the noble river ran its winding course, the leaves quivered and rustled in the air, the birds poured their cheerful songs from every tree, the short-lived butterfly fluttered its little wings; "all the light and life of day came on; and amidst it all, and pressing down the grass whose every blade bore twenty tiny lives, lay the dead man, with his stark and rigid face turned upwards to the sky."

Very natural, in quite another vein, is the same author's description of the feelings of a household on the day of a funeral. The chief thing that they know, below-stairs, in the kitchen, we read, is that "it seems like Sunday." They can hardly persuade themselves but that there is something unbecoming, if not wicked, in the conduct of the people out of doors, who pursue their ordinary occupations and

wear their every-day attire. And how with the morrow morning after little Paul Dombey's burial? The morning sun awakens the household as of old: the rosy children, opposite, run past with hoops: there is a splendid wedding in the church: the juggler's wife is active with the money-box in another quarter of the town; and the mason sings and whistles as he chips out P-A-U-L in the marble slab before him. *Telle est la vie—et la mort.*

It is like a man being buried at sea, where

> ——the constant sun lies sleeping,
> Over the verdant plain that makes his bed;
> And all the noisy waves go freshly leaping,
> Like gamesome boys over the churchyard dead;
> The light in vain keeps looking for his face,
> Now screaming sea-fowl settle in his place.

Mr. Charles Reade, in a hard-cash matter-of-fact romance, tries to makes us realise the situation of a ship's crew apparently in the jaws of death amid glorious sunshine, and the strange incongruity, therefore, between the senses and the mind in these poor fellows. "The day had ripened its beauty; beneath a purple heaven shone, sparkled, and laughed a blue sea, in whose waves the tropical sun seemed to have fused his beams; and beneath that fair, sinless, peaceful sky, wafted by a balmy breeze over those smiling, transparent, golden waves, a bloodthirsty Pirate bore down on them with a crew of human tigers."

As an utterly diverse illustration to the same effect, take, from a subsequent stage in the story, the horror of daylight felt by the deserted heroine.

"But as they drew near the gate of Albion Villa, twilight began to usher in the dawn. Julia shuddered at even that faint light, and fled like a guilty thing, and hid herself sobbing in her own bedroom."

So, again, with Lionel Haughton, in Lord Lytton's Note of Interrogation novel, when made acquainted with certain humiliating passages in his family history. He slinks away into a thick copse, longing to be alone. "The rain descended, not heavily, but in penetrating drizzle; he did not feel it, or rather he felt glad that there was no gaudy mocking sunlight." So he sits down forlorn in the hollows of a copse-covered glen, and there buries his face in his clasped hands.

So with George Eliot's Tina, whose poor little heart was being bruised with a weight too heavy for it, while Nature held on "her calm inexorable way, in unmoved and terrible beauty."

When Consuelo, newly wedded newly widowed, awoke, after a few hours' repose, and returned to the saloon, she was struck with dismay to find it empty: Albert had been laid upon a bier and carried to the chapel. But "the summer sun lighted up the sombre wainscoting of the room, while the merry call of the blackbirds sounded from the garden with insolent gaiety."

O Nature, how fair is thy face,
And how light is thy heart, and how friendless thy grace!
Thou false mistress of man! thou dost sport with him lightly
In his hours of ease and enjoyment; and brightly

Dost thou smile to his smile; to his joys thou inclinest,
But his sorrows, thou knowest them not, nor divinest.
While he woos, thou art wanton; thou lettest him love thee;
But thou art not his friend, for his grief cannot move thee.
And at last, when he sickens and dies, what dost thou?
All as gay are thy garments, as careless thy brow,
And thou laughest and toyest with any new comer,
Not a tear more for winter, a smile less for summer.

ABOUT SAGE FRIENDS WHO "ALWAYS TOLD YOU SO."

LUCULLUS is one of the Athenian "lords and flatterers of Timon," upon whom Timon's faithful steward attends, in his master's hour of need, to solicit a loan. Timon has sent Flaminius to this his fast friend, nothing doubting his present assistance. But Lucullus is a summer friend only: a mid-summer friend only. He is not for winter wear. Nothing doubting, quotha? Is Timon so confident as all that? The more fool he. Flaminius must go back *re infectâ*. Lucullus cannot think of bolstering up the sinking credit of so wasteful a master. Hasn't he told Timon fifty times that he was living too fast? Didn't he always say it would come to this at last? "La, la, la, la,—nothing doubting, says he? alas, good lord! a noble gentleman 'tis, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and often I have dined with him, and told him on't; and come again to supper to him, of purpose to have him spend less: and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty [liberality] is his; I have told him

on't, but I could never get him from it." According to Cicero, it is the part of a fool to say, Who'd have thought it? *Insipientis est dicere, Non putarem.* Applying which canon, Lucullus, who always thought it, and always told Timon how it would be, is a model of prescient candour and correctness. So that if not altogether a sure friend in need, he is a sage friend indeed. No mind has he to be classed with the aghast gapers satirised by Byron, who are said to

> ——stare, as if a new ass spake
> To Balaam; and from tongue to ear o'erflows
> Quicksilver small talk, ending (if you note it)
> With the kind world's Amen—"Who would have thought it?"

Exiled Coriolanus comes in mean apparel, disguised and muffled, to the house of Aufidius, whose saucy servants vent their contempt on so threadbare a suit, and are for turning him out neck and crop. The coming of their master results in "a thousand welcomes," and at once the tables are turned in the servants' hall. The grooms and lackeys who could see nothing in the sorrily attired stranger but a mark for kitchen insolence and brutality, now discover that from the first there was a something noble and great about that Welcome Guest.

> 1*st Serv.* Here's a strange alteration.
>
> 2*nd Serv.* By my hand, I had thought to have strucken him with a cudgel; and yet my mind gave me, his clothes made a false report of him. . . . Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in him: He had, sir, a kind of face, methought, —I cannot tell how to term it.

1*st Serv.* He had so: looking as it were,—'Would I were hanged, but I thought there was more in him than I could think.

2*nd Serv.* So did I, I'll be sworn: He is simply the rarest man i' the world.

These graceless grooms have, however, the grace to confine their prescience to thoughts, and not to claim the merit of having uttered them. They refrain, under strong temptation, from saying, I told you so. —That is a temptation which, with very slight ground for the saying it, is irresistible to noble lords and grave authorities.

I told ye all,
When we first put this dangerous stone a rolling,
'Twould fall upon ourselves,

says the Duke of Suffolk to the Privy Council, when Cranmer's exhibition of the king's ring suddenly disconcerts them in their measure against him; while good master secretary, Thomas Cromwell, plumes himself on having thought the same; for his mind misgave him that, in seeking tales and informations against Cranmer, they blew the fire that now burnt them.

Ben Jonson is following classical authority when he makes the Roman mob exult in the downfall of Sejanus,

Crying, they're glad, they never could abide him.
* * * *
——Protest
They ever did presage he'd come to this;
They never thought him wise, nor valiant.

Nobody can possibly grudge Epictetus the mild gratification of saying to his master, "I told you so," in the anecdote recorded by Origen. Epaphroditus must have been no less brutal as a master, than Epictetus was sublime as a slave. "Epictetus, when his master was twisting his leg one day, smiled and quietly said, 'You will break it;' and when he did break it, only remarked, 'Did I not tell you that you would do so?'" A less superb picture of servant suffering at the hands of master, and venting the same reminder, is that of Molière's Maître Jacques getting a beating from Harpagon, and screaming out between the blows, "Eh bien! ne l'avais-je pas deviné? Vous ne m'avez pas voulu croire. Je vous avais bien dit que je vous facherais de vous dire la verité." We may apply in a like sense the stately line addressed by Bajazet, in Racine's tragedy, to Acalide:

Je vous l'avais prédit: mais vous l'avez voulu.

Long years before official duty brought Mr. Arthur Helps into such intimate relations as at present with Right Honourable members of Her Majesty's Privy Council, he had written in one of the Essays we owe to his *horæ subsecivæ*, that those men are the grace and strength of Councils who are of that healthful nature which is content to take defeat with good humour, and of that practical turn of mind which makes them set heartily to work upon plans and propositions which have been originated in opposition to their judgment; "who are not anxious to shift

responsibility upon others; and who do not allude to their former objections with triumph, when those objections come to be borne out by the result."

La Bruyère ridicules, in his polite and polished style, the sort of men who are easily caught by some great men's ambitious project,—talk about it with eager interest, and are charmed by the very audacity and novelty it displays. They get quite used to the idea of it, and come to assume it a feasible thing. In fact, they are only waiting for its sure and signal success, when it altogether collapses and comes to nothing after all. Thereupon they change their key, and affirm with peremptory decision that the whole thing was preposterous, and never could have succeeded.

In another section of his Characteristics the same classical penman sketches a fussy, pretentious quidnunc, who had always said how it would be when two brothers quarrel, or two ministers are at loggerheads. Had he not always foretold to the two brothers this deplorable issue? Had he not always foretold of the two ministers that they would not, could not hold together for long? In one of Longfellow's later poems there is a portrait-sketch of this complacent predictive-power incarnate:

> And next the Deacon issued from his door,
> In his voluminous neckcloth, white as snow;
> A suit of sable bombazine he wore;
> His form was ponderous, and his step was slow;
> There never was so wise a man before;
> He seemed the incarnate "Well, I told you so!"

Noteworthy among the general faults in conversation enumerated by Dean Swift, is the habit some folks have, dexterously, "and with great art," of lying on the watch to hook in their own praise: they will call a witness to remember they always foretold what would happen in such a case, but none would believe them; they advised such a man from the beginning, and told him the consequences, just as they happened; but he would have his way. Byron might well say,

> Without a friend, what were humanity,
> To hunt our errors up with a good grace?
> Consoling us with—"Would you had thought twice!
> Ah! if you had but followed my advice!"
> * * * * *
> Of all the horrid, hideous notes of woe,
> Sadder than owl-songs or the midnight blast,
> Is that portentous phrase, "I told you so,"
> Utter'd by friends, those PROPHETS OF THE PAST.
> Who, 'stead of saying what you now should do,
> Own they foresaw that you would fall at last.

Mrs. Beecher Stowe in the same breath with Byron is well-nigh enough to take that breath away; but the lady is pretty nearly of a mind with the lord. Her Nina, in the tale of the Dismal Swamp, gets into a decided scrape, and comes to tell Aunt Nesbit so. "I told you you'd get into trouble one of these days," the sage senior observes. "Oh, you *told* me so!" is the impatient rejoinder: "if there's anything I hate, it is to have anybody tell me, 'I told you so.'" Aunt and niece then confabulate awhile, on the scrape in question; and anon the former re-

turns to the charge: "You see the consequences now of not attending to the advice of your friends. I always knew these flirtations of yours would bring you into trouble." And Aunt Nesbit said this, Mrs. Stowe tells us, "with that quiet satisfied air with which precise elderly people so often edify their thoughtless young friends under difficulties." There is a fund of practical significance in one of Scapin's replies to Silvestre, when warned against his itch for *des enterprises hasardeuses:*

Silv. Je te l'ai déjà dit, tu quitterais le dessein que tu as, si tu m'en voulais croire.

Scap. Oui; mais c'est moi que j'en croirai.

In deep chagrin at the disappointment of his expectations from the Minister, Peregrine Pickle resolves to make Crabtree acquainted with his misfortune, that once for all he may pass the ordeal of his satire, without subjecting himself to a long series of sarcastic hints and allusions, altogether past endurance. "He accordingly took the first opportunity of telling him that he was absolutely ruined by the perfidy of his patron, and desired that he would not aggravate his affliction by those cynical reflections which were peculiar to men of his misanthropical disposition. Cadwallader listened to this declaration with internal surprise, which, however, produced no alteration in his countenance; and, after some pause, observed, that our hero had no reason to look for any new observation from him on this event, which he had long foreseen and daily expected." Not less in the internal surprise, than in

the mendacious assurance, is Crabtree a good sample of these prophets of the past.

Supposing such folks now and then venture on an actual prediction, mightily piqued are they to bring about its fulfilment, at whatever damage to their friend. When the Greek emperor, in peril from Mahomet (A.D. 1453), who threatened the capital of the East, implored with fervent prayers the assistance of Christendom, Gibbon relates of the Roman pontiff,—no friend to the Greeks,—that, "instead of employing in their favour the arms and treasures of Italy, Nicholas the Fifth had foretold their approaching ruin; and his honour was engaged in the accomplishment of his prophecy." Swift hits off this state of mind with his usual point, in the Verses on his own Death,—where anxious inquiring "friends" are supposed to be calling to ask after the Dean *in extremis*.

> Some great misfortune to portend,
> No enemy can match a friend.
> With all the kindness they profess,
> The merit of a lucky guess
> (When daily how d'yes come of course,
> And servants answer, "Worse and worse!")
> Would please them better than to tell
> That, "God be praised, the Dean is well."
> Then he who prophesied the best
> Approves his foresight to the rest:
> "You know I always feared the worst,
> And often told you so at first."
> He'd rather choose that I should die
> Than his prediction prove a lie.

In a review of the writings of M. Viennet, of the French Academy,—who, in 1840, predicted that within ten years his fellow-peers and fellow-countrymen would be laying upon each other the blame of national ruin,—M. Désiré Nisard affirms that, certes, it is entirely allowable in one who has noway contributed to that ruin, to boast of having foreseen and foretold it. But, he adds, "Je n'en dirai pas autant de ceux qui ont travaillé de leurs mains à faire réussir leurs prophéties. Ils ont prédit la chute de la monarchie; je le crois bien, ils y aidaient. Le beau mérite, quand on a poussé la sape jusqu'au mur et ouvert la brèche, de dire, la ville prise: Je l'avais bien prédit!"

When the fagot-maker and his wife have cruelly disposed of Hop-o'-my-Thumb and his brothers, the relenting mother sets to upbraiding her husband on the subject of that accomplished fact. "It was all your fault, Richard! I told you over and over again that we should repent the hour when we left them to starve in the forest. . . . Richard! Richard! I told you how it would be!" At last, says the nursery-tale, the fagot-maker grew very angry with his wife, who said more than twenty times that he would repent what he had done, and that she had told him so again and again. He declared he would give her a good beating if she did not hold her tongue; not, indeed, the story-teller assures us, with a fine knowledge of human nature, that Richard was less sorry than his wife for what had been done; but

her scolding teased him; and, like other husbands, adds the story-teller—whose italics on this occasion we conscientiously reproduce—"*he liked his wife to be always in the right; but not to talk of being so.*" Squire Western, naturally irascible, is made even preternaturally irate by the similar aggravations of Mistress Western; who winds up so many sentences of table-talk with the ever-recurring "I repeat it to you again, brother, you must comfort yourself, by remembering that it is all your own fault. How often have I advised—" one repetition too many of which reminder provokes the squire to bound from his chair, and, venting two or three hideous imprecations, bolt furiously out of the room.

General fiction, indeed, will supply a redundant stock of examples, to the same effect, and in every shade of character. There is Miss Austen's Mrs. Allen, for instance, who, consulted by anxious Catherine Morland as to the look of the weather, has no doubt it will be a fine day, if the clouds will only go off, and the sun keep out. At eleven o'clock some rain-drops begin to fall, and "Oh dear! I do believe it will be wet," breaks from Catherine in a most desponding tone. "I thought how it would be," says Mrs. Allen. They resign themselves, after a fashion, to the doom of a wet day. But at half-past twelve it turns fine. "Ten minutes more made it certain that a bright afternoon would succeed, and justified the opinion of Mrs. Allen, who had 'always thought it would clear up.'" There is another lady-novelist's

Lady Portmore, one of the odd channels scooped out by whose restless vanity is the persuasion that she is the world's universal confidante; and who will enter into long arguments to prove that she must necessarily have foreknown any piece of intelligence or gossip that is imparted to her.* There is Mrs. Gore's Penelope Smith, "the only person who ventured to assert that *she* had always seen in Bernard Forbes the making of the greatest man in England." Again, there is that self-absorbed piece of feminine frivolity in Mrs. Stowe's novel—for we are making *place aux dames*—Marie St. Clare, who will not hear of her child Eva being in the least degree ailing till it is too late. "But now that Eva was fairly and visibly prostrated, and a doctor called, Marie all on a sudden took a new turn.—She knew it, she said, she always felt it; that she was destined to be the most miserable of mothers. Here she was with her wretched health, and her only darling child going down to the grave before her eyes." It is of herself, as ever, that Marie is thinking; not of her darling child. Inconsistent in everything else, she is uniformly consistent in entire self-absorption. Just before Eva draws her last breath, as father and mother stand beside her death-bed, "It's just what I've been foreboding," said Marie; "it's just what has been preying on my health from day to day,

* The Semi-attached Couple (the odd title of a book which would, probably, not have been so named, but for its being the correlative of that cleverer piece of penwomanship, The Semi-detached House), ch. xx.

bringing me downward to the grave, though nobody regards it. I have seen this long. St. Clare, you will see, after a while, that I was right." "Which will afford you great consolation, no doubt," said St. Clare, in a dry, bitter tone.—The Mrs. Glegg of "George Eliot," again, is a pronounced type of the species. When her sister Bessy,—Mrs. Tulliver, of the Mill on the Floss,—is forming plans, which Aunt Glegg approves not, for the advancement of her children, Aunt Glegg blames Bessy for her weakness, and appeals to all witnesses who shall be living when the Tulliver children have turned out ill, that she, Mrs. Glegg, has always said how it would be from the very first, observing that it is wonderful to herself how all her words come true. When ruin and sickness overtake the Miller, Mrs. Tulliver sends for her sisters, and there is much wailing and lifting up of hands below stairs: "both uncles and aunts saw that the ruin of Bessy and her family was as complete as they had ever foreboded it." At a later stage of the household decay, Maggie Tulliver is roused to hurl defiance at uncles and aunts, hugely to their dismay. But, "It's no more than what I've allays said," maunders on Aunt Glegg. "Other folks may be surprised, but I'm not. I've said over and over again—years ago I've said—'Mark my words; that child 'ull come to no good; there isn't a bit of our family in her.'" Pre-eminent among our family, for sagacious foresight and accurate prediction, being Aunt Glegg herself. And, as inimitable Birdofredum Sawin sings and says,

It takes a mind like Dannel's, fact, ez beg ez all ou' doors,
To find out that it looks like rain arter it fairly pours.

As for Mr. Dickens, almost every work of his would supply illustrations to the purpose. In the Pickwick papers we have Mrs. Nupkins, who had gloried in that wheedling adventurer, the self-styled Captain Fitz-Marshall, of whom she could not make too much,—facing about, on the exposure of that impostor, and reproaching her husband for ever taking up with so evident a blackleg. "Ah! you may thank your papa, my dear," Mrs. Nupkins assures the distressed daughter; "how have I implored and begged that man to inquire into the Captain's family and connexions; how have I urged and entreated him to take some decisive step!" Poor Mr. Nupkins mildly interjects the reminder that his wife had always paid great attention to the now exploded captain—had constantly asked him to the house, and lost no opportunity of introducing him elsewhere. Whereupon, "Didn't I say so, Henrietta?" cries Mrs. Nupkins, appealing to her daughter with the air of a deeply-injured wife: "didn't I say that your papa would turn round and lay all this at my door? Didn't I say so?" And sobs give emphasis to the query.

Or take Mrs. Varden, on the occasion of the match-making between Dolly Varden and Joe Willett, when it appeared that from Mrs. Varden's penetration and extreme sagacity nothing had ever been hidden. "She had known it all along. She had seen it from the first. She had always predicted it.

She had been aware of it before the principals." And she had, by her own account, observed no end of little circumstances (all of which she named) so exceedingly minute that no one else could make anything out of them even now; and had, it seemed, from first to last, displayed the most unbounded tact and most consummate generalship.

So with Mrs. Nickleby. When intelligence arrived of Madame Mantalini's failure in business, &c., "that good lady declared that she had expected it all along, and cited divers unknown occasions when she had prophesied to that precise effect." In point of fact, what Mrs. Nickleby had all along prophesied was, that her daughter Kate would anon be taken into partnership by the flourishing milliner; and her only doubt as to its future was whether the dressmaking firm would ultimately become Mantalini, Knag, and Nickleby; or, Mantalini, Nickleby, and Knag.—In the same story it is that a shrewd stage-performer observes of certain cautious demi-semi-patrons, that, if you succeed, they give people to understand that they had always patronised you; and that if you fail, they will have been quite certain of that from the very beginning.

A characteristic touch of Betsey Prig's is that where, to other rough usage of a wretched, feeble patient, she adds the torture of rasping his unhappy head with a hard brush, and observes, as she stops to look at him—his very eyelids red with the friction —"I suppose you don't like that neither!" His aspect amply justifies the surmise. "Mrs. Prig was

gratified to observe the correctness of her supposition, and said triumphantly, 'she know'd as much.'"

Once more; there is that precious piece of profundity and pomp, Mr. Pumblechook, who, on the discovery of Pip's great expectations, makes known to that lad for the first time in his life, and certainly after having kept his secret wonderfully well, that he (Pumblechook) had always said of him (Pip), "That boy is no common boy, and, mark me, his fortun' will be no common fortun'."

Mr. Charles Reade gives us a specimen of the quality in Merton, when George Fielding is crossed in love. "Merton was one of those friends one may make sure of finding in adversity. 'There,' cried he, 'George, I told you how it would end.'" And the clodhoppers at the village "public" drone to the same tone; a century nearly of voices echoing some such conversational Tristich as this:

1*st Rustic.* I tawld un as much, dinn't I now, Jarge?
2*nd Rustic.* That ye did, Richard, for I heerd ee.
1*st Rustic.* But, la! bless ye, he don't vally advice, *he* don't.

It is Mr. Thackeray's "daresay," that when Pharaoh's kind daughter found the child, and cherished and loved it, and took it home, and found a nurse for it, too, there were grim, brickdust-coloured chamberlains, or some of the tough, old, meagre, yellow princesses at court, who never had children themselves, who cried out, "Faugh! the horrid little squalling wretch!" and knew he would never come to good; and said, "Didn't I tell you

so?" when he assaulted the Egyptian. Readers will not have forgotten the same author's Mrs. Mackenzie in "The Newcomes," and the execrable garrulity with which that unbearable mother-in-law scolds everybody right and left, when the fine old colonel's fortune is lost, and protests her unvarying mistrust of the connexion she had left no stone unturned to bring about.

Byron makes even Remorse a persecutor whose prophecies and warnings are apt to come after the event:

> That juggling fiend—who never spoke before—
> But cries, "I warned thee!" when the deed is o'er.

A somewhat parallel passage occurs in Mr. Robert Browning's picturesque expansion of the text of Edgar's song in *Lear*, "Childe Roland to the dark tower came:"

> ——The tempest's mocking elf
> Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf
> He strikes on only when the timbers start.

ABOUT FORTUNE COMING SINGLE-HANDED.

A Cue from Shakspeare.

THE best of good news reaches King Henry IV. —the entire defeat of his confederate foes, and complete prostration of their powers. But it finds him sick and failing. The glorious news is come too late to recruit and restore him. He had waited for it, and longed for it, and now he is too feeble and exhausted to exult in its advent. Hence the piteous plaint of the careworn heart-sore monarch:

> And wherefore should these good news make me sick?
> WILL FORTUNE NEVER COME WITH BOTH HANDS FULL,
> But write her fair words still in foulest letters?
> She either gives a stomach, and no food—
> Such are the poor, in health; or else a feast,
> And takes away the stomach,—such are the rich,
> That have abundance, and enjoy it not.
> I should rejoice now at this happy news;
> And now my sight fails, and my brain is giddy:—
> O me! come near me, now I am much ill.
>
> [*Swoons.*

From which deadly swoon the king only revives to sink into others, more and more deadly unto the perfect death.

And as with the father at a mature age, so with the son in his early prime. As with Henry the Fourth in the Jerusalem chamber, so with Harry the Fifth in the flush of conquest at Vincennes. Agincourt won, the treaty of Troyes signed, and the English victor wedded to Catherine of France,—now, says History, with his great possessions in France to cheer him, and a son born to give him happiness, all appeared bright before King Henry. "But in the fulness of his triumph; and the height of his power, death came upon him, and his day was done." Fortune came to greet him with one hand full of gifts; but the other was empty and cold; so cold that the icy touch of it was death to him. As far as might be, with the one hand she took away what with the other she gave.

Will Fortune *never* come with both hands full? Philosophic Duke Vincentio reasons thus with life—in the like vein with dying Bolingbroke:

> ——Thou hast nor youth, nor age;
> But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,
> Dreaming on both: for all thy blessèd youth
> Becomes as agèd, and doth beg the alms
> Of palsied eld; and when thou art old, and rich,
> Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,
> To make thy riches pleasant.

There is an evil which the Preacher, the son of David, King of Jerusalem, has seen and noted, under the sun; and it is common among men: a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that

he desireth; yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.

Such is the condition of life, muses a great English moralist, that something is always wanting to happiness: "In youth we have warm hopes, which are soon blasted by rashness and negligence, and great designs which are defeated by inexperience. In age, we have knowledge and prudence, without spirit to exert, or motives to prompt them; we are able to plan schemes, and regulate measures; but have not time remaining to bring them to completion."

A great French one muses to much the same purpose, in the mood of Duke Vincentio: "Quand on est jeune, souvent on est pauvre: ou l'on n'a pas encore fait d'acquisitions, ou les successions ne sont pas échues. L'on devient riche et vieux en même tems; tant il est rare que les hommes puissent réunir tous leurs avantages: et si cela arrive à quelques-uns, il n'y a pas de quoi leur porter envie: ils ont assez à perdre par la mort, pour mériter d'être plaints." In another chapter of his "Characters," La Bruyère remarks that "Les choses les plus souhaitées n'arrivent point, ou si elles arrivent, ce n'est ni dans le tems, ni dans les circonstances où elles auraient fait un extrême plaisir." M. Frédéric Soulié, if not exactly a great French moralist, was at any rate in his time a distinguished French writer; and he exclaims,—putting into small capitals the proverb which forms the title of his book,—"O sagesse des

nations! que tu as inventé une admirable exclamation, lorsque tu t'es écriée: SI JEUNESSE SAVAIT! SI VIEILLESSE POUVAIT!" But M. Soulié hesitates not to pronounce this "une accusation contre la Divinité. Eh bien! s'il plaisait à Dieu à t'écouter et donner, soit au jeune homme l'expérience du vieillard, soit au vieillard la puissance du jeune homme, le monde serait un composé de monstres sans pitié d'une part, et de victimes de l'autre." As cynical a conclusion as if Swift had drawn it. And Swift's own experience as well as disposition—predisposition—affirmed but too bitterly the moral of Shakspeare's text. It was during the heyday of Swift's predominance at Twickenham, and Dawley; flattered and besieged by the Popes, Gays, Arbuthnots, Bathursts, Bolingbrokes —consulted as an authority by statesmen, resorted to as a counsellor by authors, quoted as an oracle by wits,—that tidings reached him from Ireland which cast a blight upon all his hopes, and compelled him to withdraw from the bright circle in which he now lived, and moved, and had his being. "The pleasure of popularity," says Johnson, "was interrupted by domestic misery." Stella was wasting away; so far gone that her recovery was no longer looked for. Swift's letters on this subject are called by Scott a true picture of an agonised heart.

The Dean had long learnt by heart what Bolingbroke said to him, of fame, in one of his letters from abroad: "When it is acquired late, the sensation of pleasure will be more faint, and mingled with the regret of our not having tasted it sooner." One of

their friend Pope's *Pensées* is, that "when we are young we are slavishly employed in procuring something whereby we may live comfortably when we grow old; and when we are old we perceive it is too late to live as we proposed."

Horace Walpole writes to the Miss Berrys: "I have been threescore years and ten looking for a society that I perfectly like; and at last there dropped out of the clouds into Lady Herries's room two young gentlewomen, who I so little thought were sent thither on purpose for me, that when I was told they were the charming Miss Berrys, I would not even go to the side of the chamber where they sat. But, as Fortune never throws anything at one's head without hitting one, I soon found that the charming Berrys were precisely *ce qu'il me fallait.*" Only, Fortune had not even in this case, with a pair of such charmers, come with both hands full.

The old gentleman, their devoted admirer, had been threescore and ten years looking for them, or the like of them; and now he was well-nigh on to fourscore; and as old Adam says in Shakspeare,

> But at fourscore it is too late a week.

In an article on the comparative mortality in various trades and professions, in the *Edinburgh Review*, it was remarked of the potentate who stands on the highest pinnacle of human greatness, surrounded, it would seem, with every condition favourable to comfort and longevity, fenced about from casualties which constantly beset the paths of ordi-

nary mortals, that his would appear indeed a charmed life: "yet the hard fact will stare us in the face, that the sands of life run far quicker with him than with any other of the educated classes." How constantly in diaries, letters, and biographies are we meeting with such allusions as this by Romilly, in his private journal, to "the Duke of Roxburgh, just put into possession of his title and of his magnificent domain, but having unfortunately obtained full possession of them only in the full maturity, or rather in the rapid decline of life"—so that Sir Samuel found him surrounded with enjoyments only when the sense of enjoyment seemed fast wearing out. Or this, again, by Sydney Smith, to "Lord Valletort possessed of Mount Edgecombe, and bent double with rheumatism! there is a balance in human conditions!" Such end

> Crowns oft ambition's most successful aim;
> Passionate longing grasps the ripen'd fruit,
> And finds it marr'd, a canker at the core.

Scarcely have the heralds proclaimed that

> Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride,

when Fortune smites with her other hand, the empty one, this exultant victor. Death follows the blow. The loss of Emily, only just gained by his prowess in the lists, is what embitters to him the loss of life:

> To die, when Heaven had put you in my power!
> Fate could not choose a more malicious hour;
> What greater curse could envious Fortune give,
> Than just to die when I began to live?

How many of the early doomed have thought that thought, as they watched their sun going down while it was yet day! Like Rodolphe Topffer, for instance, *ce romancier sensible et spirituel*, as M. de Sainte-Beuve calls him, whose vital powers gave way just when public recognition of his merits was coming upon him with the gladdening influence of a new sensation. "C'est à ce moment de satisfaction légitime et de plenitude, comme il arrive trop souvent, que sa destinée est venue se rompre: une maladie cruelle a, durant des mois, épuisé ses forces et usé son organisation avant l'heure." Corneille's Sévère is not all alone marked out for disappointment, when it extorts from him the bitter cry,

> Qu'est ceci, Fabian? quel nouveau coup de foudre
> Tombe sur mon bonheur, et le réduit en poudre!
> . . . . Je trouve tout perdu quand je crois tout gagner;
> Et toujours la fortune, à me nuire obstinée,
> Tranche mon espérance aussitôt qu'elle est née.

Toujours la fortune. Will Fortune *never* come with both hands full?

Toujours la fortune. The charges and complaints against whose humorous ladyship are sometimes vexatious and frivolous enough. As when Pyrrhus, distracted which of two promising enterprises and glorious opportunities to choose—whether to become master of all Sicily, or to put up for the throne of Macedon,—"complained greatly of fortune," says Plutarch, "for offering him two such glorious opportunities of action at once"—so afflicted was he to think, that in embracing one, he must necessarily

give up the other. For once Fortune had come with both hands too full: *hinc illæ lachrymæ*—supposing, which is highly supposable, that tears were shed.

It is an inevitable law, as Dr. Boyd says, that you cannot have two inconsistent good things together. You cannot, for instance, as he puts it, have at once your field green as it is in spring, and golden as it is in autumn; nor can you at once live in the little dwelling which was long your home, and which is surrounded by the memories of many years, and in the more beautiful and commodious mansion which your increasing wealth has enabled you to buy. "You cannot at once be the merchant prince, wealthy, influential, esteemed by all, though gouty, ageing, and careworn; and the hopeful, light-hearted lad that came up from the country to push his way, and on whose early aspirations and struggles you look back with a confused feeling as though he were another being." Take your stand with Crabbe on the beach of that sea-side Borough of his, and mark this among other markworthy figures there sketched by his graphic pen:

> Lo! where on that huge anchor sadly leans
> That sick tall figure, lost in other scenes;
> He late from India's clime impatient sail'd,
> Where, as his fortune grew, his spirits fail'd;
> For each delight, in search of wealth he went,
> For ease alone the wealth acquired is spent—
> And spent in vain; enrich'd, aggriev'd, he sees
> The envied poor possess'd of joy and ease;
> And now he flies from place to place, to gain
> Strength for enjoyment, and still flies in vain.

> Mark with what sadness, of that pleasant crew,
> Boisterous in mirth, he takes a transient view;
> And fixing then his eye upon the sea,
> Thinks what has been, and what must shortly be:
> Is it not strange that man should health destroy,
> For joys that come when he is dead to joy?

Theophrastus is said to have thought it extremely hard to die at ninety, and go out of the world when he had just learned how to live in it. Three days only before the battle of Oudenarde, Colonel Brace, in Mr. Thackeray's story, had heard of his elder brother's death, and was heir to a baronetcy in Norfolk, and four thousand a year. "Fate, that had left him harmless through a dozen campaigns, seized on him just as the world was worth living for, and he went into action, knowing, as he said, that the luck was going to turn against him." One of Lord Lytton's student heroes muses bitterly on the medical sentence of mortality that seems to hang over him just when first he sees his way to literary success: "Now, when I see before me the broad and luminous path, am I to be condemned to halt and turn aside? A vast empire rises on my view greater than that of Cæsars and conquerors—an empire durable and universal in the souls of men, that time itself cannot overthrow; and Death marches with me, side by side, and the skeleton hand waves me back to the nothingness of common men."

David Hume saw year after year glide by without bringing him the public recognition he believed himself to deserve—till he was becoming, to use his

own words, "callous against the impressions of public folly." At length, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, when his constitution was on the point of breaking up, he saw "many symptoms" of his "literary reputation breaking out at last," just when he knew and felt his time must be getting short. Compare or contrast with his experience that of Rousseau, who thus writes in his Confessions, in the decline of life, when, however, his body seemed to have been gaining strength, as if *pour mieux sentir ses malheurs:* "Et maintenant que j'écris ceci, infirme et presque sexagénaire; accablé de douleurs de toute espèce, je me sens, pour souffrir, plus de vigueur et de vie que je n'en eus pour jouir à la fleur de mon âge et dans le sein du plus vrai bonheur."

Of that eminent physician, Dr. Gooch, we are told, as of so many and many others of all professions, eminent and obscure, we might be told,—that no sooner was he freed from the dread of poverty which had haunted him in early life, than his health became sufficiently impaired to fill his mind with gloomy anticipations. Of so many and many a household might be recorded what "George Eliot" records of that fatal day at the Mill on the Floss, when the miller was struck down just as prosperity seemed to dawn upon him: "Sad ending to the day that had risen on them all like the beginning of better times! But mingled seed must bear a mingled crop." Pleasure, like Punishment, as Lord Lytton has it, hobbles after us *pede claudo:* what would have delighted us yesterday does not

catch us up till to-morrow, and yesterday's pleasure is not the morrow's. "A pennyworth of sugar-plums would have made our eyes sparkle when we were scrawling pot-hooks at a preparatory school, but no one gave us sugar-plums then. Now every day at dessert [Guy Darrell *loquitur*] France heaps before us her daintiest sugar-plums in gilt *bonbonnières*. Do you ever covet them? I never do." It is to the son of him who thus writes that we owe the lines to the same purport,

> ——To most of us, ere we go down to the grave,
> Life, relenting, accords the good gift we would have;
> But, as though by some strange imperfection in fate,
> The good gift, when it comes, comes a moment too late.

Referring in 1817 to the loss, a year before, of his darling Herbert, Southey writes to a friend: "I have not recovered, and never shall recover, last year's affliction; and my worldly prospects are improving when I have no longer a heart to enjoy them." Francis Jeffrey, a rising advocate, but newly made widower, declares the only pleasure he has now upon earth to be in doing what he thinks his "sweet Kitty" would have praised him for: "Almost the only pleasure, indeed, I had before was in receiving or in anticipating her praises." And to his brother he writes, on the same subject,—that he finds no consolation in business, and nothing but new sources of agony in success. "The ear is closed in which alone I wished my praises to be sounded, and the prosperity I should have earned with such pride for her, and

shared with her with such delight, now only reminds me of my loneliness."

Imlac, in Dr. Johnson's Tale of Abyssinia, tries to cheer up the pensive sage with bidding him enjoy the praise which all agree to give him. "Praise," said the sage, with a sigh, "is to an old man an empty sound. I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her son, nor wife to partake the honours of her husband." To Samuel Johnson himself, that fat, frouzy, raddled old wife of his was, in Macaulay's phrase, beautiful as the Gunnings, and witty as Lady Mary; and her opinion of his writing was to him more important than the voice of the pit of Drury Lane Theatre or the judgment of the *Monthly Review*. "The chief support which had sustained him through the most arduous labour of his life was the hope that she would enjoy the fame and the profit which he anticipated from his Dictionary."

> But she is in her grave; and oh,
> The difference to him!

For while he wrote the last Rambler she was given over by the physicians; and three days later she died—leaving her husband almost broken-hearted. "She was gone; and in that vast labyrinth of streets, peopled by eight hundred thousand human beings, he was alone." When the Dictionary did come out, the stalwart toiler's spoilt old Titty had been three years in her grave. He evidently alludes to her in that sternly pathetic sentence in his letter to Lord

Chesterfield, about patronage being deferred in his case till he was solitary, and could not impart the gratification. Boswell quotes on this occasion some lines by Malone:

> Vain—wealth and fame, and fortune's fostering care,
> If no fond breast the splendid blessings share;
> And, each day's bustling pageantry once past,
> There, only there, our bliss is found at last.

Gibbon—never too much given to sentimental reflections—intimates the same belief, when he says of the Emperor Heraclius coming home, after the exploits of six glorious campaigns, to enjoy peaceably the sabbath of his toils,—that, being met by senate, clergy, and people, "with tears and acclamations, with olive-branches and innumerable lamps" (the copulatives are so like Gibbon), he entered the capital in a chariot drawn by four elephants: "and as soon as the emperor could disengage himself from the tumult of public joy, he tasted more genuine satisfaction in the embraces of his mother and his son."—Plutarch says of Caius Marcius, that whereas others were valiant for glory's sake, he pursued glory because the acquisition of it delighted his mother. For when she was witness to the applauses he received, when she saw him crowned, when she embraced him with tears of joy, then it was that he reckoned himself at the height of honour and felicity. Epaminondas, they tell us, had the same feeling, and declared it the chief happiness of his life that his father and mother lived to see the victory he won at Leuctra. "He had the satisfaction, in-

deed, to see both his parents rejoice in his success, and share in his good fortune; but only the mother of Marcius was living" at the time that Caius Marcius won for himself a name—the more imposing though familiar, or because familiar, name of Coriolanus.

Diderot, with all his faults, had a heart: he was tenderly attached to his family, and quite charming is that *souvenir* of his, imparted by the middle-aged man in a letter to Mdlle. Voland: "Un des moments les plus doux de ma vie, ce fut, il y a plus de trente ans, et je m'en souviens comme d'hier, lorsque mon père me vit arriver du collége, les bras chargés des prix que j'avais remportés, et les épaules chargées des couronnes qu'on m'avait décernées, et qui, trop larges pour mon front, avaient laissé passer ma tête. Du plus loin qu'il m'aperçut, il laissa son ouvrage, il s'avança sur sa porte, et se mit à pleurer. C'est une belle chose qu'un homme de bien et sévère, qui pleure!" Dr. Boyd recognises something "intensely affecting" in the letters which the kirk-minister of Cults (it was a very poor living) sent to his boy, David Wilkie, in London, saying that he could, by pinching, send him, if needful, four or five pounds. "But before Sir David became the great man he grew, old Mr. Wilkie was in his grave: 'his son came to honour, and he knew it not.' No doubt it was better as it was; but if you or I, kindly reader, had had the ordering of things, the worthy man should have lived to see what would have gladdened his simple heart at last."

Noteworthy in the correspondence of a brother-artist of Wilkie's, William Etty, is the frequent reference to his old mother, whenever success elates him. When he was elected a Royal Academician, in 1828—beating his competitors by eighteen to five—"I am overwhelmed with joy," he writes. "Oh! that my poor mother was here. She was anxious about the event as myself." To another friend he jubilantly writes: "I have reached one of the highest pinnacles of my ambition, and am now waving my cap (with an eagle's feather in it) on that pinnacle; am too overjoyed to talk common sense . . . .; a joy doubled on my mother's account. My best regards to Mrs. Bulmer. I hope she will go and see my mother," that the latter "may have some one to whom she can speak her joy." The expected sympathy from his mother not reaching Etty by post so promptly as he looked for, he writes to chide for the delay: "You, that I expected to be the first, are now one of the last. . . . *You*, whom I most wished to hear from, say nothing." In a later epistle to an attached friend, he avows, "One of the very pleasantest parts and consequences of success, to me, is the reflection of its pleasure from the hearts and faces and feelings of those I esteem. Fame herself would lose half her charms, stripped of those fascinating ornaments." In that chapter of Lord Lytton's penultimate fiction, in which Mr. Vance explains how he came to grind colours and save halfpence, in earlier life, the narrator exclaims, with as much bitterness as is in him: "No matter. They

are dead now—all dead for whose sake I first ground colours and saved halfpence. And Frank Vance is a stingy, selfish bachelor."—In one year John Constable had a son born to him, and painted his best large upright landscape, and became legatee of twenty thousand pounds from his father-in-law. But in the same year he lost his wife—a bereavement he seems never to have got the better of; and when, not long afterwards, he was elected an Academician, though gratified at the honour, he could not help saying, in Johnson's spirit if not in his very words, "It has been delayed till I am solitary, and cannot impart it." So with another distinguished R.A., the late William Collins. His election when it came, was hailed by him as no common honour; but with the pleasure were mingled sombre recollections of the "old boyish studio in Portland street"—when his father used to cheer him, through all obstacles, gaily predicting Academic honours for him, and confident he should himself live to witness their attainment. And now, when the honours had arrived, and the "poor author's" favourite day-dream had brightened at last into reality, bereavement had "made that father absent from the family board, and voiceless for ever among the rejoicings of the domestic circle." So the "poor author's" grandson, more prosperous in authorship, Mr. Wilkie Collins, writes of the occasion.

If Cortes, on landing in Spain after his career of conquest in a New World, was saddened by the news of his father's death—upon whose welcome

and congratulations he had been counting with but too eager a confidence—on the other hand he was happy in finding his aged mother yet alive, and able to accompany him on his return to New Spain, with his magnificent retinue of pages and attendants—in striking contrast to the forlorn condition, as Prescott describes it, in which, twenty-six years before, he had been cast loose, as a wild adventurer, to seek his bread upon the waters.

Recording the admiration and flatteries won by Sybil, at the banquet where she "messed" with ladies of high degree, Lord Lytton, in his historical romance, observes, that there had been a time when such honour and such homage would have indeed been welcome; but now, ONE saw them not, and they were valueless. The absence of one may make all the difference. As in Southey's lines:

> Such consummation of my work will now
> Be but a mournful close, the one being gone,
> Whom to have satisfied was still to me
> A pure reward, outweighing far all breath
> Of public praise.

During Moore's visit to Ireland in 1830, he was one day escorted home, with his wife and sister, by "almost the whole congregation" of Dominick-street Chapel, after his acting as "collector to a Catholic charity sermon." And in the fulness of the little man's heart, this entry in his Diary is characteristic enough: "The greater part of them followed us the whole way to Abbey-street (in perfect silence, it

being Sunday), and then took leave of us at the door. Was delighted to see that my poor mother was at the window, and witnessed our escort." A few days previously Moore had been rapturously applauded as a speech-maker at a public meeting; and the Diary has its surge of *amari aliquid* to dash the joy, as he bethinks him of his dead girl, Anastasia, "and the delight she would have felt in witnessing my success had she been spared to us."

Exultant at the success of his play, in 1858, Leigh Hunt, newly a widower, and well stricken in years, writes to an intimate friend: "But there were mourning blots in my joy, especially when I got home, and could not go direct into one particular room." A. K. H. B. refers in one of his essays to his having once, at a public meeting, heard a speech by an eminent man, whom he had never seen before, but upon the grave of whose young wife, dead many years ago, he remembered to have read an inscription, in a certain churchyard far away. "I thought," says the essayist, "of its simple words of manly and hearty sorrow. I knew that the eminence he had reached had not come till she who would have been proudest of it was beyond knowing it or caring for it. And . . . I thought I could trace, in the features which were sad without the infusion of a grain of sentimentalism, in the subdued and quiet tone of the man's whole aspect and manner and address, the manifest proof that he had never quite got over that great grief of earlier years."

There was no guile or false pretence about Men-

delssohn when he assured his father (writing from Düsseldorf in 1835) that the approbation and enjoyment of the public, to which, says he, "I am certainly very sensible, only causes me real satisfaction when I can write to tell you of it, because I know it rejoices you, and one word of praise from you is more truly precious to me, and makes me happier, than all the publics in the world applauding me in concert." Before the year was out, that beloved father was no more. But Mendelssohn tells a friend, "I shall now work with double zeal at the completion of 'St. Paul,' for my father urged me to it in the very last letter he wrote to me, and he looked forward very impatiently to the completion of my work. I feel as if I must exert all my energies to finish it, and make it as good as possible, and then think that he takes an interest in it." In another letter he says that his father's dearest wish was progress: "he always directed me to press forwards, and so I think I am doing his will when I continue to labour in this sense, and endeavour to make progress without any ulterior views beyond my own improvement." Accordingly, when, at the Düsseldorf performances of "St. Paul," the people gave him a flourish of trumpets or applauded, it was very welcome for the moment, he writes, "but then my father came back to my mind, and I strove once more to recal my thoughts to my work."

A similar feeling is noticeable on the part of the late Baron Alderson, in his college days. His intimate friendship with his eldest sister, Isabella, was

blighted by her death; and the senior wrangler that was to be thus expressed his sense of her loss, amid the excitements and incitements of his splendid career at Cambridge:

> E'en 'midst the contests of the classic shade,
> When Learning hailed me for her favourite son,
> I felt a void—for she, alas! was dead
> Whose smile had more than graced the triumph won.

But as the examination drew near, even from the untimely death of her who had been his earliest companion and friend he drew, says his biographer, an additional motive for endeavouring to distinguish himself, in the thought of the pleasure his success would have given her if living. "Do you know," he writes, to another sister, "that I have taken into my head what I hope will be a still greater incitement to me to endeavour to distinguish myself—that at any rate, if she will not feel any addition to her happiness now, yet she would if she were alive have felt it so—and that it is a sort of sacred duty I have to perform."

Nil sine te me prosunt honores: Horace's words are applicable in another sense than the original one. When Madame de Staël's Oswald hurries away from the almost fanatical admiration of the gazing crowd, whose hearts he has won by his gallantry at the fire, his thoughts revert at once to the father he has so recently lost. "Sweet as was the first sense of the good he had just effected, with whom could he share it, now that his best friend was no more? So wretched is the orphan, that felicity and care alike

remind him of his heart's solitude." And if ever that wretchedness was feelingly felt, in middle life, and by recognised genius, it was by the writer of that passage, Necker's devoted and inconsolable daughter.

Lord Lytton's Maltravers in the club-room catches his own name in the columns of a paper put into his hand: that work which in the fair retirement of Temple-grove it had so pleased him to compose—in every page and every thought of which Florence Lascelles had been consulted—which was so inseparably associated with her image, and glorified by the light of her kindred genius—was just published. And now, Florence was dying, if not dead. The publication had been delayed for trade purposes, and Maltravers had all but forgotten the existence of the book. "And now, in all the pomp and parade of authorship, it was sent into the world! Now, *now*, when it was like an indecent mockery of the bed of death—a sacrilege, an impiety! There is a terrible disconnexion between the author and the man," Lord Lytton goes on to say—between the author's life and the man's life; the eras of visible triumph may be those of the most intolerable, though unrevealed and unconjectured anguish. "The book that delighted us to compose may first appear in the hour when all things under the sun are joyless. This had been Ernest Maltravers's most favoured work. . . . How had Florence, and Florence alone, understood the beatings of his heart in every page! And now! ——." Mr. Disraeli insists that few great men have flourished, who, were they candid, would not acknow-

ledge the vast advantages they have experienced in early life from the spirit and sympathy of woman. How many an official portfolio, he exclaims, would never have been carried had it not been for her sanguine spirit and assiduous love! How many a depressed and despairing advocate has clutched the great seal, and taken his precedence before princes, borne onward by the breeze of her inspiring hope! "A female friend, amiable, clever, and devoted, is a possession more valuable than parks and palaces; and without such a muse, few men can succeed in life—none be content." When the parks and palaces are possessed only after she is gone, what is their worth? Relatively—absolutely—any way, what are they worth to the possessor now? Mr. Hayward rightly pronounces it absurd to say that merit is sure to be appreciated if the aspirant will bide his time; for the time may never come, or come too late—when his faculties have been deteriorated by disuse, and his spirit is broken by disappointment—when "all he had wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds." "Joseph, if our father could see us!" was Napoleon's exclamation to his brother, on the day of his placing on his own head the imperial crown. Jeffrey, in the flush of exultation at being appointed Lord-Advocate, writes to a friend who he hopes will come and see him, "You will find me glorious in a flounced silk gown, and long cravat,—sending men to the gallows, and persecuting smugglers for penalties,—and every day in a wig, and most days with buckles on

my shoes. I wish my father had lived to see this!"—To his father the first Earl of Malmesbury delighted on all occasions to refer the success of his future life: "While my father lived," he says, "the strongest incentive I had to exert myself was in the satisfaction I knew he would derive from any credit I might acquire; and the many and distinguished honours I have since received have suffered a great diminution in my estimation from his being no longer a witness to them." Patrick Fraser Tytler, the historian of Scotland—or rather, one of the historians, be it said, in remembrance of such names past or present as Dr. Robertson and Mr. John Hill Burton—thus writes to his friend Basil Hall, soon after losing his excellent father: "How often have I thought, what exquisite delight it would give me, should I ever arrive at any excellence in my profession, to plead before *him* to whose instruction and love I owed it all." But here let M. Jules Simon's note of interrogation be our full stop: "Quel est l'orphelin, fût-il déjà en cheveux blancs, qui, venant de faire une noble action, ne revoit pas, au fond de sa pensée, le sourire reconnaissant de sa mère?"

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THE END.

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